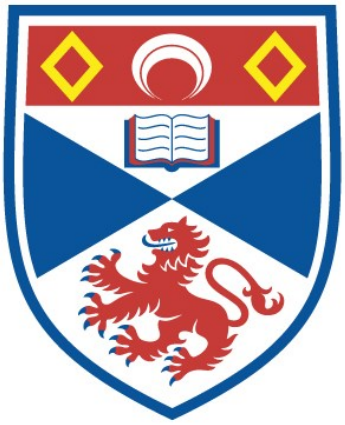
AN APPLICATION OF CERTAIN THOMISTIC METAPHYSICAL AND EPISTEMOLOGICAL THEORIES TO THE CONTEMPORARY CLASH BETWEEN NATURALISTIC AND NON-NATURALISTIC ETHICS

Doreen Mary Tulloch

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD
at the
University of St Andrews



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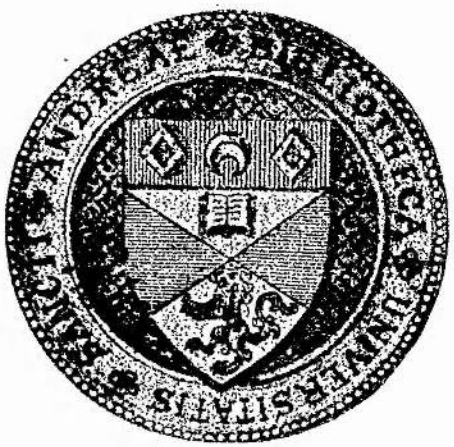

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A THESIS

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BY

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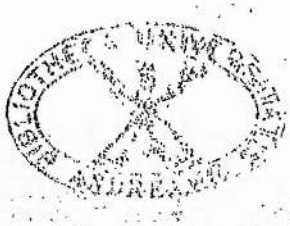

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I hereby declare that the following thesis is based on results of research work carried out by me, that the thesis is my own composition, and that it has not previously been presented for a higher degree.

The research was carried out in the University of Louvain and the University of St. Andrews. I also pursued my research in Cambridge where I was able to consult Dr. A.C. Ewing.

I certify that Doreen Mary Tulloch was admitted a Research Student in the University of St. Andrews on 1st October 1948, that she has spent eleven terms on her research work under Ordinance 16, that during part of this period she worked, by permission of the Senatus Academicus, in the University of Louvain, that during the remainder of the period she worked in the University of St. Andrews, except for some weeks which were spent at Cambridge consulting with Dr. A.C. Ewing, that she has fulfilled the conditions of Ordinance No. 16 (St. Andrews) and the Regulations thereunder, and that she is qualified to submit the accompanying thesis in application for the degree of Ph.D.

I matriculated in the University of St. Andrews in October 1936, and followed a course leading to graduation in Arts until June 1940. In October 1948 I began research on the subject of this Ph.D. thesis, which is now being presented.

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INTRODUCTION.

In an article in HORIZON (1), entitled "On the Analysis of Moral Judgments", A.J. Ayer writes, "All moral theories, intuitionist, naturalistic, objectivist, emotive, and the rest, in so far as they are philosophical theories, are neutral as regards conduct. To speak technically, they belong to the field of meta-ethics, not ethics proper." Elsewhere (2), he describes the work of moral philosophy in the following terms:- "A strictly philosophical treatise on ethics..... should, by giving an analysis of ethical terms, show what is the category to which all such pronouncements" (i.e. those employing ethical terms) "belong."

This view of the nature and purpose of ethics, as a philosophical discipline, is not peculiar to Ayer and to those who accept his "positivist" (3) analysis of moral judgments. It is a view already subscribed to, at least in its essentials, in the first chapter of G.E. Moore's PRINCIPIA ETHICA, which was published in 1903, and which has greatly influenced British ethical speculation. Indeed, while they may not all be prepared to accept the particular terms in which Ayer describes the work of the moral philosopher, and while certain may think that the latter does have the further task of discovering what

/<u>what</u> things are good or right, most contemporary British philosophers do subscribe to the view that the fundamental problems of "Ethics" as a philosophical discipline are concerned with question of the correct definition, or analysis, of ethical terms, such as "right" and "good", or of one amongst them. Thus, Moore writes (1), "..... this question, how "good" is to be defined, is the most fundamental question in all ethics." And A.C. Ewing, in the Preface to THE DEFINITION OF GOOD, argues that the first and most fundamental question of ethical enquiry is the question "What is the definition of goodness".

The controversy between naturalism and non-naturalism, which we are to examine in this thesis, is about an <u>ethical</u> problem in the sense in which the term "ethics" is understood by these thinkers. It deals with the question whether ethical terms, and, in particular, in the form in which we are to examine it, the term "good", can or cannot be analysed into, or defined by means of, terms signifying sensibly observable data. Ewing describes a naturalistic view of ethics as one which "analyses ethical concepts solely in terms of the concepts of a natural science" (2). A non-naturalist view of ethics, on the other hand, is one in which ethical propostions are recognised to contain "at least one concept which cannot be thus analysed" (3).

Nevertheless, if there is a sense in which this discussion

/discussion can be described as ethical, it seems to us that Ayer has brought a welcome correction of terminology, and an aid to precision of thought, with his use of the term "meta-ethical". It would probably be difficult to obtain agreement among present-day thinkers as to the correct naming of the philosophical discipline, or disciplines, comprised under "meta-ethics", and it does not seem desirable to attempt to reach agreement on this question of correct denomination at this point. But we hope to show that the issue between the naturalist and the non-naturalist, while its professed object is the nature of ethical concepts (to use Ewing's terminology), or of what are considered to be ethical concepts, is, in fact, a dispute about the extent and composition of the conceptual order. Does this order include "objects" which have not been derived from sensible experience, as the non-naturalist claims, or are all our concepts so derived? This may seem like a dispute about what is present in a given field (that signified by the terms conceptual order) but, in fact, our fashion of viewing the conceptual order is itself affected by the view we take regarding the fundamental characteristics of the cognitive act as such. Hence, involved in this controversy are problems concerning the nature of knowledge, and we shall argue that the basic point of issue between the naturalists and the non-naturalists concerns

/concerns what we shall call the ultimate "principle of intelligibility". Basing their arguments on different principles of intelligibility, it is impossible for either contestant to convince or convert the other.

Unconvinced by either side in this dispute, we have therefore thought it worthwhile to examine the theory of "principle of intelligibility" as that is found in the philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas, and to employ this in an effort to make clear to ourselves the exact grounds of our dissatisfaction with both sides ~~of~~ in this celebrated dispute. The plan of this thesis is, then, as follows:- In Chapter I we shall consider what St. Thomas means by claiming that "being is the first intelligible". Chapter II gives a brief account of Moore's conception of the nature of the disagreement between himself and the "naturalists", and draws attention to certain epistemological implications of his own position. This is followed by a chapter (Chapter III) on Ewing's epistemological theory, which is required as a preliminary to our detailed examination of non-naturalism as this is conceived and defended by Ewing, our main source of reference for this latter being THE DEFINITION OF GOOD. Published in 1947, this work is the most recent comprehensive and explicit defence of the non-naturalist position. This examination is undertaken in Chapters IV and V, and a final chapter, Chapter VI, offers some

/some suggestions for a more satisfactory theory of goodness. Our contention is that a "principle of intelligibility" which stops short at "being of a certain kind" cannot provide adequate grounding for value-judgments and that these require to be rooted in a metaphysics of being. The Thomist theory of Ontological Goodness is a metaphysical theory employing the metaphysical category of Act and Potency, and the suggestions we offer are based on this theory.

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(3) Art. Cit. p.184.

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(1) G.E. Moore, Principia Ethica, Cambridge 1948, p. 5. (Henceforward referred to as P.E.)

(2) A.C. Ewing, The Definition of Good, Macmillan, New York 1947, p. 36. (Henceforward referred to as D. of G.)

(3) D. of G. p. 37.

CHAPTER I. THE INTELLIGIBILITY OF BEING.

Introduction. The most characteristic feature of the philosophy of St. Thomas is its vigorously metaphysical approach: it is towards the clarification and elucidation of the notion of being, towards the deepening of their grasp of being in all its depth and amplitude that the energy of those who profess to be "Thomists" is directed. And for these philosophers "explanation" is, in the last resort and fundamentally, explanation in terms of being, or of the principles of being.

The term "metaphysical" has, in modern times, fallen into such disrepute that it is desirable to point out briefly certain of the features of St. Thomas's philosophical outlook which will serve, at least provisionally, to allay the suspicion, so often entertained by modern thinkers, that the metaphysical system referred to under the name of "Thomism" is a highly sophisticated "play of concepts". It is true that the mode of presentation in certain of the older manuals of Thomistic metaphysics does little to correct this impression. But a certain lack of historical perspective is shown when this charge is carried back to the philosopher who has given his name to this system. We must not forget that, if St. Thomas's work is marked by a firm confidence in the power of the human mind to make intelligible to itself the nature of

/of the real, this confidence finds its pre-philosophical source, and constant nourishment, in a fundamental Christian attitude in which it is recognised that both knower and what is known are the effect of the creative act of a Personal God, in whom truth and being are one. Man is not the creator of what he knows; if he can make the real intelligible to himself this is because the real is intelligible. In the Christian setting of his thought St. Thomas's fundamental realism expresses itself in a certain docility before being as it is given to man, a creature and not creator. There is an "open-ness" before the whole field of human experience, which is recognised as the experience of an embodied intellect. Consequently, the confidence in man's power to know the real as it really is is accompanied by the recognition that this grasp of the real takes place according to the conditions of an embodied intellect, which can only realise the act of knowledge in co-operation with the senses. The "Intellectualism" of St. Thomas is far from dogmatic rationalism which seems, too often to be considered as the outstanding mark (and condemnation) of a "metaphysical approach" to philosophical problems.

These points will receive further elucidation in the course of this chapter as we attempt to determine the exact significance of the theory that "being is the first intelligible". This examination falls into three sections.

/sections. In the first section we shall defend the Thomist position against the charge that, having first measured being to the intellect we then extend the intellect to all that is "of being", and that therefore what is presented as a "philosophy of being" is no more than a rationalistic system of concepts originally constructed by us. This defence will be reinforced in the second section in which we shall attempt to answer the question, "What, in fact, does St. Thomas mean by 'being'?". This will, in turn, point to the need for an examination of the act in which the intellect grasps being, and this will be dealt with in the third section.

Section 1. Being is the First Intelligible.

It is in the DE VERITATE (1) that perhaps the most frequently quoted text relative to our subject is found. See also (2). St. Thomas writes, "That, however, which the intellect conceives first as best known, and in which it resolves all conceptions is being (ens) as Avicenna says in the beginning of his METAPHYSICS, book I, chapter 9. Therefore, all other conceptions of the intellect must be arrived at by an addition to being. But something cannot be added to being as an extraneous nature, in the manner in which a difference is added to a genus or an accident to a subject, for every nature is essentially being, and therefore the Philosopher in the 3rd book of the METAPHYSICS proves likewise that being cannot be a genus." (3)

If we were to consider this quotation in isolation from certain fundamental ideas of St. Thomas's thought we might be misled into thinking that, for him, the idea of being is a "clear and distinct" idea and that he considers that, in its fully developed form, our knowledge consists in the linking of all other concepts to this idea, without any appeal to experience. There is, however, in the first place, no justification for interpreting the phrase "quod primo intellectus concipit quasi notissimum" as meaning that the intellect first knows

/knows being best, in the sense of most clearly and distinctly. The first sentence of the corpus of this article refers to the need in all investigation of starting from that which is known in itself (nota per se), as opposed to that which is known through something other than itself. Following on from this the phrase "quasi notissimum" must be taken to refer to the relation of being to the intellect, and not as a description of the type or form of knowledge which the intellect has of being. Being is conceived by the intellect as "best", or "most", known in the sense that it is not conceived or apprehended through anything other than itself, and everything else is conceived in relation to it. "For that which first falls under apprehension is being, the understanding of which is included in all things whatsoever a man apprehends" (1). There is no justification, therefore, for treating the "first intelligible" as a clear and distinct idea in the sense in which that is understood in the Cartesian ideal of knowledge. Moreover, in the second place, we are not entitled, from either of the above quotations, to infer anything with regard to the manner in which the understanding of being is "included in" all things whatsoever a man apprehends. In particular, we must recognise that the fact that the understanding of being is "included in" our apprehension

/apprehension of "all things" does not rule out the possibility that this understanding may itself depend, in its development, on our "apprehension of all things", nor that sensible experience is not involved in this latter.

If we consider the root of the term "intellegere" as "intus legere", signifying to read inwardly (1), we may say that, in claiming that being is the first intelligible and that the understanding of being is included in all our apprehensions, what St. Thomas is saying is that both the original and ultimate field of the intellect's activity is being; that this field is, of its nature, "open to" the "penetration" of the intellect; and that, no matter what may be the object of a particular act of "understanding", this object must be viewed within the intellect's grasp of being itself. Whatever the intellect thinks of, it thinks of as "of being", and only in so far as it does seek to measure itself to the being of that which it apprehends can it perform its function of understanding, or "reading from within". Conversely, "everything is knowable in so far as it has being" (2); i.e., the characteristic of being able to enter into a cognitive relation with the intellect depends upon the being which an object possesses and upon nothing less, or more specific, as, for instance, on its possession of sensible qualities (as is claimed by empiricism), or on

/on the possibility of its subsumption within an order of clear and distinct ideas, as this is envisaged in Cartesian idealism.

It seems desirable at this point to insist on the radical difference between "Thomist intellectualism" and what we have called "dogmatic rationalism". By the latter we mean a theory of knowledge built upon the assumption of the complete autonomy of reason to affirm and herself "found" her affirmations by the mere contemplation of what she herself conceives. On this view reason can, by herself, reach truth without the aid of anything extraneous to her own activity. Intellectualism, on the other hand, is a theory concerning the power or capacity of the human intellect to grasp and make clear to itself the nature of the real, and by "make clear" we here mean to present to itself the real <u>as it really is</u>. But what is important to note is that, thus understood, Intellectualism does not carry with it any prescription regarding the way in which this knowledge, this"making clear to itself the nature of the real", is to be realised. The epistemological conditions of human knowledge remain to be determined. But already it seems clear that Intellectualism is incompatible with dogmatic rationalism. It seems to us that, when it is logically developed, the latter ends in identifying the real with the mind's

/mind's concepts, whereas, as we understand it, Intellectualism implies 1. a capacity which is distinct from realisation, and 2. a capacity which is <u>really</u> capacity; i.e., which is not simply an "absence" to be "filled up" with the real as such, but a distinct positive power which will leave its imprint on what "fills it up", or on what it "receives". Thus, St. Thomas writes (1), "the received is in the receiver according to the mode of the receiver", and, elsewhere (2), "We must not base the diversity of natural things on the various logical notions or intentions which follow from our manner of understanding; for reason can apprehend one and the same thing in various ways". From this, and similar statements in his works (3), it is clear that for St. Thomas our concepts are not <u>objects</u> of knowledge, but <u>media</u> through which we know a reality which is distinct from them, and must so remain.

The purpose of this short section has been to clear away certain misconceptions which might arise with regard to the quotation from the DE VERITATE, in which being is described as the "first intelligible". We have, however, had occasion to notice certain positive aspects of this ~~Thomist theory~~, and these must now be clarified. In the first place, we drew attention to the fact that the "knowableness" of an object is dependent on its being, and

/and on nothing less. Clearly, the significance of this cannot be appreciated without an account of what St. Thomas means by being. This will be dealt with in the following section. In the second place, we have seen that, according to St. Thomas, we cannot assume a one-one correspondence between our concepts and the real, treating the former as simple mirrors of the latter. In this connection it is necessary to consider the unique position of the notion or idea of being, as that, in and through which, everything is apprehended or understood, and this will be examined in the third section, in which we hope to show that, in the judgment of existence, the intellect is conscious of being confronted with an absolute measure of its own activity.

Section 2. What Is "Being"?

We have considered in what sense being (ens) is the first object of the intellect. We have noted that, while it is true that the intellect finds in being the original and ultimate point of reference it does not follow that the notion of being is a clear and distinct idea. We must now examine what, in fact, St. Thomas means by this "being", which is the first intelligible.

At this point a question of method may be raised. It may be objected that what we are about to present shows the defects to which we referred in the Introduction in that it gives the impression of a "play of concepts". To this we would reply that it is true that our presentation is "abstract" if by that is meant that it does not profess to analyse and build up its account in constant reference to a specific experience. There are, however, two important reasons for this. In the first place, the "experience" in question would have to be "the experience of being". But we here find the paradox that the very reasons which might seem to make such a starting point easy are the reasons which render it impossible. For the Thomist the apprehension of being is involved in all apprehension, and consequently we can say that every "cognitive experience" is an

/an "experience of being". Nevertheless, this does not enable us to make the "experience of being" our starting point, for the simple reason that, since there is no experience which is not an experience of being, we can find no positive criteria which would enable us to mark off by empirical notes the experience about which we are talking. It follows, therefore, that if what is demanded of us is an "empirical approach" in this sense we can, in the nature of the case, do nothing to meet it directly; but we can point out that it is a gratuitous assumption to treat every philosophical enquiry which does not proceed empirically in this sense, as a rationalistic "play of concepts".

In the second place, there is, however, a grave objection to the very employment of the phrase "experience of being". The reason is that the term "experience" is most frequently employed to signify a type of knowledge actually constituted as knowledge, whereas the being which St. Thomas describes as the first intelligible is not so much "known" as an object, as it is the field in which knowledge takes place; it is the "first intelligible", but this does not necessarily mean that it is in itself a fully constituted object of knowledge. Furthermore, the phrase "experiental knowledge" is employed to signify a type of knowledge characterised by its immediacy.

/immediacy. In this sense what is being emphasised is the direct face to face contact of the knowing mind with a real existent thing, or being. It is clear, however, that in this case it would be wrong to talk about the first intelligible as "experienced", since it is not a thing or a being. It can neither be identified with the Supreme Being nor with any one finite being. On the contrary, it is that in and through which the development of our knowledge of all being takes place, whether this knowledge be immediate or inferential. And we may note that if we accept this theory of being as the "first intelligible" then the notion of "experience" in this present sense itself requires elucidation in the light of the relationship between intellect and being. It cannot be treated as a primitive notion.

We shall now consider what St. Thomas means by "being". In our original quotation from the DE VERITATE we find a summary account, calling on the authority of Aristotle, of the transcendental nature of the notion of being. We are told that being cannot be a genus, for all differences are"of being" (1); that being is found in all the categories, and that its differentiation must consequently be "in intrinseco". But while St. Thomas accepts Aristotle's definition of Metaphysics as the "science of

/of being as being" (1), and quotes his arguments for the transcendentality of the notion of being, there is a difference of fundamental importance in the fashion in which these two philosophers consider being. And this difference is forcibly indicated by J. de Finance when he writes, "Toute la signification, toute la valeur du thomisme dépendent de la façon dont il conçoit l'esse" (2).

It is incontestable that to the notion of "esse" or "existence", St. Thomas accorded a place and function in his philosophy far different from that recognised by Aristotle. For, whatever may be the possible implications of Aristotle's remarks concerning "existence" in the POSTERIOR ANALYTICS (3), and of the undoubted realism of his conception of science, it remains the case that in his metaphysics Aristotle does not mention "existence" among the possible meanings of the term "being", and that, for him, the most perfect manifestation of being was "primary substance". The task of the philosopher was to discover the most fundamental principles or causes of being, and, first and foremost, of primary substance (4). And this enquiry was conceived along the same lines as the other sciences. It posed questions in the order of "quiddity", i.e. of what made a substance to be the substance that it is, and it did not concern itself

/itself with questions in the order of existence (1). But if, for Aristotle, "to be real", "to be a thing", signifies primarily and properly "to be a substance", i.e., a self subsistent entity, for St. Thomas "to be real" signifies primarily and fundamentally "to exercise the act of existing", and while, according to him, it is the case that only substances do exercise this act as their own, and are therefore entitled to be called "beings", the term being itself is derived from the term "to exist" (2). Again St. Thomas says that the term being (ens) is nothing other than "that which is", and that it refers at one and the same time to the thing, by "that which", and to existence (esse), by "is" (3). In his translation of the DE ENTE ET ESSENTIA A.A. Maurer draws attention to the difficulty of finding a satisfactory translation of the word esse. He employs the phrase "act of existing", and he writes, "It (i.e., esse) is the to be of a thing, its supreme dynamic energy or actuality. According to St. Thomas, esse is other than essence (De Potentia, 7, 2 ad 9). To translate esse by a noun is to reify it and to conceive it as if it were a substance or abstract essence. Esse, however, is a verb, and it designates, not an essence or substance, but the act which is the to be of the substance". (4)

The significance of this distinction may escape us at first view, for we may say that in both Aristotle's and St. Thomas's view of "ens" there is involved two "components"; for Aristotle, being signifies an "essence or nature as self-subsistent", and, for St. Thomas, it signifies "that which is existing" and it may be argued that in the two conceptions we have a reference both (a) to a "quiddity" - to <u>that which</u> - and (b) to existence.

Is the 'activist' sense of St. Thomas' description so important? Are we here concerned with anything more than a difference in grammatical form? In answering this two points must be borne in mind:- (i) The question does not concern the choice of one "component" to the exclusion of the other. It is a question of the relative value or importance of the one <u>vis à vis</u> the other in our conception of being. (ii) The criterion of the relative position of these two "components" is "intelligibility", since we are concerned with what being "says to the mind", or where, in the strangely complex notion of being, the mind primarily drawws its "intellectual sustenance".

When the problem is presented in this way, the answer is short. For Aristotle intelligibility goes hand in hand with purity of form or essence, and, moreover, in spiritual substances no distinction is possible between essence and existence. Existence confers no new value

/value on essence, but is identical with it. On the other hand, where there is a distinction between essence and existence, namely, in the case of a form which is realised in matter, this stems precisely from that which is in itself unintelligible, i.e. matter. It is clear, therefore, that for Aristotle the "way of intelligibility" from the mind's first apprehension of the real is in the line of form or essence. It is in this that the mind finds the fullest, most complete and perfect manifestation of being.

It is sufficient to recall the conception of ontological contingency as that is involved in the idea of a free creative act ex nihilo to realise how different must be the view of St. Thomas on the relative value of essence and existence in the mind's apprehension of being. For this contingency is radical, striking at the very roots of the being of all finite realities. It is thus no longer possible to consider the perfection of being which these realities manifest as a perfection of essence or form to which existence adds no new value.

On the contrary, "to be", to "have being", "to be a being" is primarily "to exist". (1) And that which does not exist, either in itself, or in another, has no value or perfection of being at all (and consequently has no 'perfection' at all, for what is not "of being" is

/is "nothing".) Thus for St. Thomas it is in existence that the intellect finds the most perfect expression or manifestations of being, and consequently, "the way of intelligibility" from the mind's first apprehension of the real must be in the line of existence, if it is to keep in contact with its object, viz. being. F. de Finance describes this in the following terms: "Sous le regard du métaphysicien, l'ens s'épanouit et manifeste sa structure intime, toute l'intelligibilité de sa notion apparaît centrée sur le pôle lumineux de l'existence, et le langage exprime à sa manière, par la catégorie du participe, cette participation". (1) And, again, referring to the difference of attitude between Aristotle and St. Thomas, he sums up what we have been trying to say in the following words: "l'esse represente pour Saint Thomas, la valeur suprême, le faîte de l'actualité. On exprimerait bien l'originalité de la position thomiste, en disant qu'elle déplace de la forme vers l'existence le pôle positif du réel". (2)

We must emphasise again that we do not intend to suggest that for St. Thomas esse takes the place of ens as the "first intelligible". It is, as de Finance illustrates by his use of the term "pôle", a question of "direction" or "weight" between the elements present in the notion of being, present, that is to say, in "that

/"<u>that which is.</u>"

Nor, when we talk of the "way of intelligibility" being in the line of existence, do we mean to lay down the actual mode of progress of human knowledge. For St. Thomas, "the proper object of the human intellect, which is united to a body, is the quiddity or nature existing in corporeal matter." (1)

But this epistemological thesis does not contradict the basic metaphysical principle which is to the effect that in whatever form or mode a given intellect realises knowledge, the metaphysical condition of knowledge lies in the intelligibility of being, and this intelligibility stems ultimately from "existence" as that which confers, first and finally, all "value of being" on essence or quiddity and makes it "intelligible".

We can now consider the significance of the theory that the intellect, in its activity of "understanding", is measured by being and by nothing less. We shall do so by showing that, as we have said, but contrary to what may appear, there is really no contradiction between this theory and the statement we have quoted from S. Th. Q84,a.7. In the first place, St. Thomas does not say that our knowledge is limited to objects in space and time. Indeed, the above quotation is completed by the statement, "and it is through these natures of visible

/visible things that it "(i.e. the intellect)" rises to a certain knowledge of things invisible". The term "proper" has here the meaning of "appropriate" or "proportional", and the explanation of the suitability of such objects to the human intellect which we find in the works of St. Thomas, far from infringing the view that the intellect is measured by being as being, serves to bring out the full import of this theory. If we examine the statement concerning the proper object of the human intellect, we see that it contains no suggestion that this object is intelligible <u>because</u> it is material and therefore open to sensible verification. There is no suggestion at all that the <u>source</u> of intelligibility has been moved from being to "material being", nor that the human mind is not capable of knowing material being as being - i.e. in and through that complex notion of which the most important note is the component <u>esse</u>. The statement is concerned with the <u>type</u> of being which the human intellect is fitted to know, namely "nature existing in corporeal matter", and we must note that the terms "nature-existing" express explicitly the two "aspects" of being which we have been descfibing in this present section. So far, then, we can say that here, as indeed always, if our thesis is correct, the fundamental cognitive effort of the intellect is to conform itself to

/to being and to nothing less. What, then, is the import of the final phrase, "in corporeal matter"? Can we explain this in such a way that the principle of intelligibility remains unqualified? St. Thomas's explanation is that the human intellect is "united to a body". It is this fact which determines the type of object which it is fitted to know. The union between the intellect and the body is of such a kind that the senses do not simply provide the occasion for an entirely autonomous activity on the part of the intellect, but affect its very way or mode of exercising its function of conforming to the real, or to that which has being. It (the human intellect) possesses no innate ideas in the contemplation of which it sees the real as it really is; on the contrary, it "has to gather knowledge from individual things by way of the senses." (1) Hence the type of being which it is fitted to know is that whose presence can be made manifest by the senses, i.e. corporeal being. It does not follow, however, that human knowledge is limited to <u>what</u> the senses can reveal, which would, in strictness, be no more than the here and now presence of individual sensible qualities.

This is the point at which we can see most clearly the fundamental difference between the Thomist view of

/of the nature of knowledge and that which is involved in the Humian claim that "reason is the handmaid of the senses." The implication of the latter is that the senses are, in themselves, a sufficient source of a complete act of knowledge. This is precisely what St. Thomas refuses to accept, and it seems to us that it is here that his disagreement with empiricism (in the modern Humian sense) lies. It is true that St. Thomas's whole analysis of the nature of knowledge is based on a certain pre-philosophical conception of what knowledge is. But it is hard to imagine in what other manner he, or indeed anyone, could proceed in this matter. In St. Thomas's eyes knowledge is characterised by self-consciousness, in the sense that to know is to say to oneself what a thing is, or to present to oneself the real as it really is, or to make manifest to oneself what is the case. These are so many phrases which, we suggest, are frequently employed at a pre-philosophical level in answer to the question, "In what does knowing consist"? And it is this presence of the self to the self as a subject <u>before</u> whom or <u>to</u> whom things are made manifest which we mean to signify by the term "self-consciousness".

It may be noticed that all of the phrases we have chosen as descriptions of knowing emphasise the activity

/activity of the subject; it is, e.g., the subject which makes manifest to itself what is the case, which presents to itself the real as it really is etc. This use of activist terms must not mislead us into looking on knowledge as a pure activity of the subject, producing its own object. We could also describe knowledge in passive terms, as, for example, "having the real as it really is revealed to oneself". Only here we must notice that if we are to preserve the self as subject this revelation cannot be something done to or imposed on oneself, but that it must be recognised for what it is, namely a revealing of the real as it really is, so that even here there is activity of the subject at least in the sense in which the subject may say to itself, "Yes, I see that the thing really is like this".

It is because of this presence of the self to the self in the knowing act that St. Thomas refuses to allow that the senses as such, considered in isolation from the intellect, are sufficient sources of a cognitive act, since no sense as such is capable of the reflexive act involved in terms like "saying to oneself", "making manifest", "revealing", and "having revealed". According to St. Thomas, the reflexive activity required in order to constitute knowledge as knowledge can only be found in a spiritual or non-material power and hence in

/in the intellect and not in the senses, except in so far as they are "taken up by" or informed by the intellect. For example, the impression of a certain shape and colour which is, in fact, the sensible effect produced in my sense of vision by the presence of a red-headed man is not in itself knowledge of a red-headed man. To be able to say, "I see a red-headed man" is already to presuppose an activity (reflexive) and to employ categories which cannot be found in or provided by the senses themselves. Thus, for St. Thomas, the intellect is involved in all knowledge. Perception or sensible knowledge is itself informed by intellect which renders intelligible the material or data delivered by the senses. It is not our purpose to give a complete account of all that is involved in this activity of rendering intelligible the material of knowledge which the senses provide. To do so we should have to devote considerable time to the Thomist doctrine of abstraction and this would carry us beyond the limits which we have set ourselves in this chapter. But we may note here that this whole doctrine is an attempt to determine the rules which must be observed if human thought is to be faithful to the real (1) and that as such it presupposes a certain view of the relation which exists between human thought and the real, or between the logical and the ontological order.

/order. It presupposes that the former is neither a passive reflection nor an independently constructed representation of the latter. Thought has its own contribution to make in the task of "rendering the real intelligible", but it is a <u>contribution</u> and not an independent reconstruction, and hence the need to determine the rules which must be conformed to if our thoughts about the real are, in fact, to conform to "the real about which we think". This is the problem envisaged by the theory of abstraction.

This doctrine itself, however, forms part of a more basic theory, namely, that the intellect is measured by being and by nothing less. Nothing of what we have said regarding the particular mode of human knowledge contradicts this. We have seen that the senses are not in themselves sufficient sources of the cognitive act. They must be "informed" by the intellect if the data they provide is to become significant, i.e., is, in fact, to become "revealing" of the real.

The theory we are here considering consists in the claim that the intellect <u>is</u> capable of "informing" the senses in such a way that they do become co-operative in constituting the cognitive act. The intellect is capable of this precisely because it is not limited in its effort of rendering the real intelligible to viewing or con-

/considering only a certain aspect of the real. If it were so limited it could never raise the data given it by the senses to the level of revealing the real as it really is, but only to the level of revealing the real as it seems to be, or, as it appears, to an intellect which is limited in its horizon.

But everything that is is "of being" and so far as the intellect is limited by nothing less than being - and this is not indeed a limitation of its activity but the very condition of its being as a cognitive power - it is capable, with the co-operation of the senses of realising the cognitive act in which that which is is revealed as it really is. The data provided by the senses can become revealing of the real only because the intellect is able through its grasp of being to bestow on them an ontological value. Thus, for instance, to talk about the senses revealing sensible qualities is already to raise the sensible impressions received by the senses to a status within being, namely, the status of qualities of a thing, i.e. of something which has being.

And it is because the intellect is capable of grasping, imprecisely no doubt in the first instance, but nevertheless adequately, (in the sense that all further precisions take place from within the original

/original apprehension) the <u>being</u> of that which is qualified as, for example, red-headed, that it can render the data significant, in the sense of revealing the real.

It is true that the type of being which the senses informed by the intellect can reveal is corporeal being, but the ultimate reason why such a type of being can be revealed lies in its <u>being</u>, and <u>not</u> in the sort of being that it is. The intellect thus is still measured by being and by nothing less.

We must now examine the nature of that act in which the human intellect becomes aware of or grasps being.

Section 3. The Judgment of Existence.

In talking of the mind's contact with being we have used two phrases, each of them, in a sense, non-commital (so far as they were deliberately chosen to avoid more technical philosophical phrases). These are "grasp of being", and "notion of being". The first of these phrases tends to suggest something close to immediate experience, whereas the second points towards conceptual thought. But in each of them there is a counterbalancing element. Thus, "experience" for human beings implies passivity rather than activity, and we use the term "grasp" to counterbalance this. On the other hand, conceptual thought suggests autonomous activity, and we chose the less activist term of "notion" to counterbalance this. What we are trying to capture in these phrases is the peculiar nature of the "external pressure" under which being becomes present to the mind, and the peculiar nature of the "spontaneity" in and through which the mind recognises being. (By "spontaneity" we mean to draw attention to the element of autonomy or freedom which the mind is conscious of enjoying in so far as it transcends, in its conceptual activity, the immediate data given to it "here and now" by the senses.) These two phrases, "external pressure" and "spontaneity" suggest respectively what are often described as the empirical and

/and rationalistic aspects of the cognitive act. Now, under the false dilemma (as we consider it to be) of either empiricism, or rationalism we tend to equate "external pressure" with brute facticity and to consider that the mind comprehends or understands in proportion as it escapes from this "external pressure". Empiricism and rationalism represent the two extreme limits of this "escape", empiricism limiting it to the ordering of the sensible data by purely formal systems, rationalism attributing to thought a power to create (or "discover") the content of its object. Both really agree, so it would seem, in believing that an object is intelligible just in so far as thought imposes intelligibility on it. Neither of them seems to entertain the possibility that intelligibility may be given; may, that is to say, impose itself upon the mind. But this is precisely what we claim when we say that being is "the first intelligible". For, here we have, as it were, external pressure at its greatest (since everything is 'of being' and nothing escapes being), and yet this does not equal "brute facticity": for, on the contrary, in its "grasp of being" the spontaneity of the mind is realised to the highest degree, for it is within the "light of being" that the mind can exercise its conceptual activity.

/activity. Being is, we may say, the "natural habitat of the mind", or, it's "natural light".

These reflections suggest that our difficulty in finding the correct terminology for describing the mind's contact with being stems from what may be called the distinctive nature of the behaviour of being vis à vis the mind, and, conversely, of the mind's behaviour vis à vis being.

It is this double phenomenon which we must now examine, and to do so we introduce the two terms "immanent" and "transcendental". By saying that being is wholly immanent in a concrete being we mean to say that there is no element, aspect, or part of that being which is not "of being". By saying that being is also transcendental, we mean that while it is immanent in the concrete being so that nothing in or of the being falls outside the comprehension of the notion of being, nevertheless this concrete being is not co-extensive with the notion of being. There are other concrete beings to which the notion of being equally applies, and, furthermore, there is precisely nothing to which this notion does not, in some way, apply. What must be underlined here is the immanence of being in each and every concrete being. If this is not sufficiently emphasised it is difficult to see the fundamental difference in the way in which we must view the relation between the

/the notion of being and a concrete being, and the way in which we must view the relation between the notion of an attribute or quality and the concrete being which possesses it. If we say that in both cases what we do is to view the concrete being under a general notion or idea or concept, which can have other applications, we must note that the grounds for so being able to view a given concrete being differ in the two cases. For example, if we can view a given particular object (e.g. "This rose") under the concept red, this is because this rose is characterised by the quality of redness, and it is by virtue of its possessing this quality that it can be viewed under the general notion. Moreover, we can significantly say that it is by virtue of it's redness, and not by virtue of its scent, or texture, etc., that it can be so viewed. We must, therefore, be able to separate out in our mind or abstract this quality of the rose from the other qualities which determine it, and this same condition will govern the applicability of the concept red to other particular objects. We can say that in each case a given object can be brought under the concept by being considered exclusively in one or a number (for we can have complex concepts) of its determinations. When, however, we view "This rose" under the general notion of being our

/our viewing does not bear on a determination or a number of determinations of the object, but on this rose in its concrete entirety, for we necessarily view it in all that it is. We can, if we like, say that it is by virtue of its being that this rose can be brought under the general notion of being, but we must note that in this case the phrase "by virtue of" carries us immediately back to the given object in its concrete entirety, and not, as in the case of red, to the given object considered simply in one or a number of its determinations. Thus, different objects fall under the general notion of being not by virtue of their possessing some one or a number of determinations in common, but they do so by each being the concrete being that it is. There is a singular bi-polarity contained in the very notion of being whereby at one end the same time this notion points back to cover any given object in its concrete entirety and points forward to the unlimited possibility of its realisation in other concrete beings.

It seems to us that there is only one act of the mind in which such bi-polarity can be contained and expressed and this is the act of judgment. The act of judgment is a reflective act in which the mind is conscious of bringing together or uniting two terms.

/terms. (We are here dealing with simple subject-predicate judgments, and we realise that a complete exposition of the thesis we here put forward would require an account of the relation between such judgments and relational judgments.) If the mind is to be conscious of uniting it must also be conscious of a certain distinction or non-identity between the terms it brings together, and hence we can conclude that it must be able, in some way, to hold them apart from each other. If, however, this is true of all judgments there is, nevertheless, an important difference between judgments in which a quality is attributed to a particular subject, and the judgment of being or existence, "This is, or exists". In the former case the "holding apart" is provided for by a prior act of abstraction in which the particular quality is disengaged from the concrete being and raised to the status of an abstract concept, through which the subject may then be viewed partially, or from a certain aspect. In the case of the judgment of existence or being, however, since there is no part of the concrete being which is not "of being", the possibility of holding apart what is signified by "being" from what is signified by "This" cannot depend on a prior act of abstraction, but must be <u>given to the mind</u>; i.e., the

/the "non-identity" cannot be due to the abstractive activity of the mind, but must itself be present in the very apprehension of being. This means that, in fact, the idea or notion of being does not arise outside of at least an implicit judgment in which being is attributed to a particular subject. Furthermore, in other judgments the identity which is involved in attribution is an identity within a distinction: the predicate, while it is identical with the subject considered under a certain aspect, is not identical with the subject in its entirety as a concrete being. But in the case of the judgment of existence what we have is better described as a distinction within an identity: for here it is clear that no part of the subject escapes the comprehension of the predicate. If, then, there is a certain distinction between the subject and the predicate this distinction must be contained within the identity. We might put the difference between the judgment of existence and other simple subject-predicate judgments as follows:- in other judgments the mind unites what it has first separated, whereas in the judgment of existence the mind separates in uniting.

Certain conclusions can be drawn from this examination of the notion of being, and of the conditions

/conditions under which the mind can be said to form this notion:-

(1) The notion of an identity which contains difference - which is, we may say, concerned with difference, or realised through difference - is the notion of a unity of order, and this suggests that the notion of being, as that is delivered to us in the judgment of existence, is an analogical notion. An analogical term is one which does not retain exactly the same sense in its different applications, but which is itself affected by the objects to which it is applied. It is nevertheless not a purely equivocal symbol because the way it is thus affected can be reduced to a rule: an order can be established between its different usages. In the case of the term being this analogy is an analogy of proportionality, and it seems to us that a useful approach to this Thomist theory can be made through the analysis we have made of the judgment of existence. For, when we attribute being or existence to two different concrete beings we are asserting a resemblance between them so far as they are both "of being", but this resemblance cannot be accounted for by saying that they share a "common characteristic", but differ in other characteristics. Each of them is totally and entirely "of being". We cannot, therefore, say that each of these beings is

/is an instance of a "universal" which is realised in the same way in each of them. The point is that each concrete being realises being in its own way, in being the particular concrete being that it is. For example, John realises being in his own way, and Peter realises being in his own way, and in doing so each may be said to be realising his own being. Hence, the resemblance between John and Peter, so far as they are "of being" can only be described as a resemblance of proportionality in so far as John is to his being as Peter is to his being, and so on... . Thus the unity between John and Peter under the general notion of being is a unity of order, the order of proportionality just described, and we can say that the type of unity which the notion of being confers on the subjects of which it is predicated is a unity of order.

(2) It would seem that in the case of the judgment of existence we have given to us the fundamental conditions of judgment as such. We cannot ask, "What are the conditions of such a judgment?", or, "What preliminary conditions must be fulfilled in order that such a judgment should be made?". There are no preliminary conditions. The notion of existence is the formal determinant of the act of judgment as such. For, if we may say, on the one hand, that all judgment involves the

/the bringing together of what can be viewed separately and that in particular judgments attributing qualities to a given object this possibility of "viewing separately" is catered for by a prior act of abstraction, we must admit that, on the other hand, so far as every judgment consists in taking up a position before being, the bringing together of what the mind has separated can ultimately be justified only because being presents to the mind in its original grasp of it (and this "grasp" is in the judgment "This exists") a real unity which makes place for, or realises itself through difference. The significance of these remarks may be overlooked unless it is recognised that while the psychological process involved in abstraction may be said to begin from the sensible data, the concept, once formed, is used as a medium in the act of knowledge, and this knowledge is, as always, knowledge of being. What is known through the concept is not a part of the being which is being viewed as the subject of the judgment, but the whole being, only considered from a certain aspect. It is one and the same being which is, and, is red. It's "being red" cannot be viewed as something apart from its "being", but must be viewed as its way of being. Consequently, if abstract concepts derived from sensible data can fulfil their function of giving us (as predicates in judgments)

/judgments) knowledge of existent things this is, in the last resort, due to that fundamental judgment - "This exists" - in which it is recognised that the identity asserted between "This" and "exists" leaves place within it for difference.

(3) In the idea of being, and, more particularly, in the act of judgment in which this idea or notion necessarily expresses itself, the mind is conscious of being confronted by an absolute measure of its own activity. In asserting of anything that "It exists" the mind is conscious of inserting this thing in an absolute order from which nothing escapes (since everything is "of being") and which nothing can contradict (for nothing is opposed to being, except, precisely, "nothing"). And the mind is thus conscious of being ruled by what is absolute and unconditional. Being presents itself to the mind without condition. It fulfils, we may say, the conditions of Kant's "categorical imperative", enjoying, in relation to the intelligence, the qualities of independent and unconditionality, which make of it an absolute standard, an unconditional norm or value. The intelligence, of its very nature, accepts and rules itself by being, and we cannot seek for any further ulterior conditions or reasons for this acceptance.

Conclusion

The aim of this chapter has been to provide, from a study of the Thomist principle of the "intelligibility of being", certain points of reference which we can use in examining the problem of naturalism versus non-naturalism. The value of this account seems to us to lie in the fact that within this theory of the intelligibility of being certain important questions relative to epistemology are opened up. We have not looked for specific "Thomist" answers to specific epistemological problems, but we have provided ourselves with a number of guiding principles within which to place particular epistemological problems as these arise in the examination we are to undertake. The following points seem to us important:-

(1) The Thomist theory of knowledge seems to us to steer a middle way between rationalism and empiricism, or, more correctly, it may be said to transcend this dichotomy by resolutely refusing to identify one component of, or element in, the cognitive act with that act in its complex unity.

(2) The theory that being, an absolute and transcendental value, is the "first intelligible" suggests the need for a clarification of the notion of "experience"

/"experience" itself. All human experience is a meeting of intelligence and being, and this must also be true of "sensible experience". It therefore seems highly suspect to treat sensible experience, interpreted as the passive registration of sense data, as an original starting-point in the development of a realist epistemology. We might say that the temptation to do so arises from the mistaken idea that, to preserve the "realism" of knowledge in the face of the constructive activity of thought, it is necessary to establish a contact with the real which is utterly non-conceptual. The Thomist answer to this is that original contact with the real is established in the judgment of existence, in which the predicate is an idea - or concept (though, if we call the notion of being a concept, we must realise that it is unlike other concepts in that it does not provide us with a merely partial, abstract, view of the real) - through which the subject is grasped in its concrete being. The idea of being has a dynamic quality whereby the mind is carried directly to concrete being, and thus directly to the ontological order. But it is still by means of an idea that cognitive contact with the real is established, and in this the activity of thought is not cut out, but is measured by an absolute standard.

(3) The Thomist theory of the intelligibility of being provides the grounds for a metaphysical theory of the act of judgment itself. This suggests to us the need to go further back than the level of concepts and their composition and division, for this level itself requires to be grounded in being. Consequently, we may question the force of arguments concerning the nature of the real which treat the concepts as "given" entities. We may question whether such arguments can ever get beyond the logical or intentional level. We know that, far from treating the latter as a mere replica or mirror of the real order, which it simply reflects faithfully, adequately and passively, St. Thomas insists that we cannot pass directly from one order to the other. Not all distinctions in the logical order reflect distinctions in the real order, and, consequently, not all relations in the logical order reflect real relations. "We must not base the diversity of natural things on the various notions or intentions which follow from our manner of understanding"(1). Plato erred because, "He thought that the form of the thing must of necessity be in the knower in the same manner as in the thing known"(2).

(4) We must note that the mind is measured by being, and by nothing less; that is to say, it is not measured

/Measured by being of one or another specific kind, but simply by being. We can only appreciate the significance of this theory if we bear in mind that "being" for the Thomist represents a value of great richness and depth, which requires a highly complex metaphysics for its elaboration. It is extremely important to bear this in mind because, if it is true that the formal determinant of the cognitive act is being as such, it may nevertheless be the case that the mind does not recognise this, and that, in the place of the notion of transcendental being, it forms the notion of being of a certain kind. And thus, in the epistemological order it will rule its cognitions not by the principle of the intelligibility of being as such, but by a principle of intelligibility based on being of a certain kind. We can understand how this may come about when we realise that what the human mind is aware of is always being of a certain kind, and that what is presented to it is being in Space/Time. Now, according to the Thomist theory all human cognition involves intellectual activity, whose formal object is the transcendental value of being: this is first discovered in the judgment of existence. It is nevertheless possible for the human mind, in its effort towards intelligibility to turn away from this strictly

/strictly metaphysical element present in its knowledge and to concentrate its interest on the qualities of what it knows. In this way it will be led to erect a principle of intelligibility based not on being as such, but on being of a specific kind, as, for example, sensible being. For the Thomist, on the contrary, an object is intelligible by reason of its <u>being</u>, and it can become intelligible to us in the measure in which we can place it within the absolute order of being: and final intelligibility is provided by metaphysical explanation and <u>by nothing less</u>.

(5) In conclusion, it is interesting to note that the principle of the intelligibility of being, understood in its metaphysical sense, explains how it is possible for the human intellect to formulate, in the epistemological order, a principle of intelligibility which stops short at being of a certain kind. Intelligibility is, for the Thomist, a transcendental "property" of being: every being, in so far as it <u>is</u>, is intelligible. But being, for the Thomist, is an analogical notion. This same analogical character will consequently mark its transcendental property, intelligibility: this too will be an analogical notion. We can say, therefore, that

/that intelligibility will be realisable in different ways, just as the transcendental value of being is realised in different ways. It would seem, therefore, correct to say that there will be a type of intelligibility which corresponds to the type of being which is sensible being, and that this intelligibility will not be quite the same as the intelligibility which characterises, for example, mathematical thought and its object. Now, for the Thomist, all these "intelligibilities" find their ultimate grounding in the metaphysical "laws of being", and St. Thomas says, "The soul does not judge of all things according to any kind of truth, but according to the first truth, inasmuch as it is reflected in the soul as in a mirror, by reason of the first principles of the understanding"(1). If, however, this is not recognised (if, we may say, we do not go far enough back in our reflective analysis of knowledge and of its object) then, under the very dynamism which links being with intelligibility, the human mind will tend to erect one or other of these "intelligibilities" into an absolute principle of intelligibility as such. And, armed with this principle it will necessarily seek to dominate the whole expanse of the real, forcing the diversity of the latter into the straight-jacket of a type of intelligibility which is

/is not, in fact, transcendental and absolute. These final remarks may have considerable importance in connection with the problem of the nature and definition of goodness. If goodness is, as the Thomist holds, a transcendental "property" of being, then its intelligibility is a <u>metaphysical</u> intelligibility and it will require metaphysical categories for its elucidation.

References. CHAPTER I.

Page 10.

(1) St. Thomas Aquinas, Quaestiones Disputatae, Vol.I. De Veritate, Marietti, Turin 1949, Q.1, a.1.
(2) See also, De Ente et Essentia, Introduction; S.Th. I. Q.5, a.2, and I-II. Q.94, a.2.
(3) Illud autem quod primo intellectus concipit quasi notissimum, et in quo omnes conceptiones resolvit, est ens, ut Avicenna dicit in principio Metaphysicae suae (lib. I, c. ix). Unde oportet quod omnes aliae conceptiones intellectus accipiantur ex additione ad ens. Sed enti non potest addi aliquid quasi extranea natura, per modum quo differentia additur generi, vel accidens subjecto, quia quaelibet natura essentialiter est ens; unde etiam probat Philosophus in III Metaphys.(com. 10), quod ens non potest esse genus, sed secundum hoc aliqua dicuntur addere supra ens, in quantum exprimunt ipsius modum, qui nomine ipsius entis non exprimitur.

Page 11.

(1) S.Th. I-II. Q.94, a.2.

Page 12.

(1) Sed S.Th. II-II. Q.8, a.1., and De Veritate, Q.1, a.12.
(2) S.Th. I. Q.16, a.3.

Page 14.

(1) S.Th. I. Q.84, a.1.
(2) S.Th. I. Q.76, a.3, ad 4.
(3) E.g., Contra Gentiles, I, Ch. 53.

Page 18.

(1) See Aristotle's Metaphysics, III (B), 998 b 15-30.

Page 19.

(1) Met. IV (T), 1003 a 20.
(2) J. de Finance, Etre et Agir dans la Philosophie de Saint Thomas, Paris, 1945, p. 79.
(3) Posterior Analytics II, 92 b 10.
(4) See Met. IV (T), 1003 b 10-20, and 1005 a 30-35.

REFS. CHAPTER I (Contd.)

Page 20.

(1) See L. De Raeymaeker, Philosophie de l'Etre, Louvain, 1947, pp. 64, 65, and pp. 135-137; and E. Gilson, l'Etre et l'Essence, Paris, 1948, Ch. III.

(2) See In Metaphysicam Aristotelis Commentaria, Turin, 1935, Lib.II, Lect.II, (558)... hoc nomen ens quod imponitur ab ipso esse.

(3) See In Perihermeneias, Lect. 5, n.20.

(4) A.A. Maurer, On Being and Essence by St. Thomas Aquinas, p.28, footnote (12).

Page 22.

(1) St. Thomas Aquinas, In Met., Lib.XII, Lect.I, (2419) - Ens dicitur quasi esse habens.

Page 23.

(1) Etre et Agir, p.114.

(2) Etre et Agir, pp.115, 116.

Page 24.

(1) St.Th.I. Q.84, a.7.

Page 26.

(1) S.Th.I. Q.76, a.5.

Page 29.

(1) See, for example, the article by Georges Van Riet, "La Theorie Thomiste de l'Abstraction" in the Revue Philosophique de Louvain, Aout 1952, especially p.393.

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(1) S.Th.I. Q.76, a.3 ad 4.

(2) S.Th.I. Q.84, A.1.

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(1) S.Th.I. Q.16, a.6. ad 1.

CHAPTER II. FACT AND VALUE.

Introduction.

From our general account of the Thomist theory of being as "the first intelligible" it is already clear that in that philosophy "value" must, in some way be "carried in being". For the Thomist a "philosophy of value" cannot be conceived in separation from a "philosophy of being". Whatever may be the exact nature of the relation between the concept of goodness and the transcendental notion of being, it is clear that the former can only be conceived in relation to the latter. Without elucidating further this philosophical conception, we can say that it is in marked contrast to at least one contemporary theory in ethical speculation. This is the theory which holds that there is an irreducible opposition between "fact" and "value"; this theory, though not new, was explicitly defended in the PRINCIPIA ETHICA of G.E. Moore, originally published in 1903, and it has been reaffirmed more recently in THE DEFINITION OF GOOD, published in 1947 by Dr. A.C. Ewing, as well as in the ethical writings of C.D. Broad (e.g. FIVE TYPES OF ETHICAL THEORY), J. Laird (A STUDY IN MORAL THEORY) and W.D. Ross (THE RIGHT AND THE GOOD: THE FOUNDATION OF ETHICS).

In giving this list (which we do not claim to be exhaustive) of British philosophers who subscribe to the

/the "fact-value" division, we do not mean to imply that this view is peculiar to British philosophical thought. The notion of value as "norm", as "what ought to be", opposed and divorced from "fact", from "what is", is found (not to go further back in history) in the work of Hermann Lotze in the second half of the nineteenth century, and it lies behind the axiological theories of value of such German and Austrian philosophers as N. Hartmann, Brentano, and Max Scheler. There is, however, sufficient that is distinctive of the British philosophers' treatment of this theory to justify a separate examination of their position, and it is to this that we shall limit our enquiry. It may be added, moreover, that, so far as we have been able to ascertain, there has been no direct influence of these continental thinkers on the main defenders of this theory in this country, namely G.E. Moore, and A.C. Ewing. (Professor Moore refers in his PRINCIPIA ETHICA to Brentano's "The Origin of the Knowledge of Right and Wrong", which he read <u>after</u> he had written his own work.) We do not, however, deny that a common origin may be found, in part at least, in post-Kantian "positivism", and in the effort to preserve "value" from final dissolution in a world whose ultimate significance or "intelligibility" is, so it is claimed, contained in the propositions of

/of science.

If, however, we were to approach our subject from a study of this common origin an adequate treatment would necessarily involve us in a detailed historical and comparative study of theories claiming the title "positivism", together with a study of the various efforts made to "save" value in the face of such a philosophy. Such a study would expand unnecessarily the limits of this thesis, and would not, in any case, release us from the task of considering in detail the distinctive features of British ethical speculation. We therefore consider it advisable, in the absence of such a detailed study, to approach our subject more directly and to avoid as far as possible the prejudice which may result from an intemperate tendency to consider and to classify the views of our authors in the light of "historical origins".

Section 1. The Nature of Philosophical Ethics.

It is to Professor G.E. Moore and Dr. A.C. Ewing that we owe the detailed treatment of the theory in question, and the general description which follows is largely drawn from their work, and, in particular, from the PRINCIPIA ETHICA and THE DEFINITION OF GOOD. This conjunction of the work of Professor Moore and Dr. Ewing may be objected to on the grounds that there

/there are important differences in the conclusions put forward in the works/referred to and that, in fact, part of Dr. Ewing's main argument (viz. that good <u>is</u> definable) is directed against the position which Professor Moore takes up on this question in PRINCIPIA ETHICA. While this is true and important this difference of conclusion only serves to throw into relief the common conception within which both review their subject matter.

From this conception two elements may be singled out for attention. It is the intimate relation of these two elements within the conception shared by Moore and Ewing which gives to their work its distinctive character.

1. In the first place we find in both Moore and Ewing an insistence on the necessity, at the outset of any ethical enquiry, of distinguishing clearly between two questions, viz. a. "What is the nature of goodness," and b. "What things are good." The former question, concerning the nature of goodness, they both agree, is "the most fundamental question in all ethics". (1) And it must be clearly understood and its true answer recognised before any attempt is made to systematise our ethical experience, or to determine "the place value is to occupy in our conception

/conception of reality." (1).

2. In the second place, they share the view that the autonomy of Ethics requires that there should be at least one simple, indefinable, unanalysable object of thought, by reference to which Ethics may be defined. (2) For Moore this simple, indefinable, unanalysable object of thought is "good;" for Ewing it is "fitting" which, together with certain psychological elements, forms the complex "good." (Good means "fitting object of a pro-attitude.") But whether we take "good" or "fitting" as the ultimate object of ethical thought, what is important to note is that in describing their respective concepts as indefinable and unanalysable both Moore and Ewing are implying that ethics is distinguished from another science not simply in that it considers things from a certain aspect or point of view (as the physicist and the biologist may study the same reality from different points of view) but in that, in the first place, it considers a certain unique "object." We may say that, for Moore, "good" provides at once the term of reference by which Ethics is defined, and the final terminus of ethical analysis. If, on the one hand, we may say that ethics studies things in so far as they are good, we must, on the other hand say that the outcome of this study is that the

/the reason they are good is that they are good. (With Ewing the position is rather more complicated in that for him "good" is definable, but in the end it seems that here too we must say the reason why something is the fitting object of a pro-attitude is that it is fitting that it is the object of a pro-attitude.)

We can now see the significance of the distinction between the two questions of the nature of goodness and of what things are good. For, if, in the last resort, no reason can be given why something is good, but simply that it is good and is seen to be good, it is clear that no study of the nature of that which is good can contribute to our knowledge of the nature of goodness. Consequently when we ask "What things are good" we should be perfectly clear that the answer is in no way an answer to the first question. But we shall only be clear about this if we have as Moore says, fully understood the first question, and clearly recognised its true answer.

An objection may, however, be made at this point - we may ask why it should be necessary to draw attention to the distinction between the two questions: for do we, e.g. have any tendency to confuse e.g. redness with red things, or, "humanity" with Peter and Paul? Are we

/we not therefore insisting on the obvious? This objection helps us to bring out further the peculiarity of ethics as a <u>science</u>. For while it is true that we do not tend to confuse the abstract quality "redness" with the things which it qualifies, it is also true that we do not consider that the redness of things constitutes the formal object of a science - the science of "red things." On the other hand we do consider a "science" of ethics to be possible - i.e. a system of universal propositions, concerning "things that are good". Furthermore, concerning the second example, while we do consider humanity as the formal object of a science, we do think that the concept of "humanity" is analysable and we <u>do</u> think that studying Peter and Paul will help us towards elucidating it and that such elucidation will be in terms of universal propositions. And, in turn, the latter will tell us something about Peter and Paul etc.

We may say that "Ethics" is like a science, or is a science, in so far as part of it is concerned with universal propositions and their systematisation, but it is unlike other sciences in that those universal propositions are not elucidations of its formal object; they concern its field of manifestation. The other part of ethics - and the most important part - is concerned

/concerned not with the presence of characteristics in things, but with the analysis and description of these characteristics "in themselves." It would seem to be in virtue of this part of the subject that ethics is considered a philosophical discipline, since part at least of the philosopher's task (and some would say the whole of it) is the analysis of concepts employed by the "scientist."

However, in saying "these characteristics in themselves" we draw attention to the abstract conceptual nature of the object of "philosophical" ethics; for neither Moore nor Ewing consider themselves "platonists"; neither would say that "goodness" as such, or fittingness as such exists: what exists are particular things characterised by "goodness", or particular things characterised as "fitting objects of a pro-attitude". (1)

The first and most important part of ethics therefore would seem to be concerned with concepts; with the question of the relation of the various ethical concepts among themselves, (e.g., which of them is, or are, simple) and with the question of the status of these concepts vis à vis sensible experience (e.g., are they a priori or empirical?). And, finally, since these concepts function in judgments it is clear that the formal nature (as opposed to the real content) of

/of these judgments will be of direct interest to philosophical ethics, in throwing light on the nature of these ethical concepts.

If this position is consistently maintained it would seem that in the last resort ethics, as a philosophical discipline, is cut off entirely from the real and is reduced to a branch of epistemology.

These remarks are sufficient here to illustrate our remark in the introduction, viz. that at least one group of contemporary philosophers treat under the name of "Ethics" questions which, to use Ayer's phrase, are more correctly described as meta-ethical: these thinkers seem to consider that their task is the examination and analysis of ethical propositions, with a view to revealing their logical form and the epistemological status of their "ethical" elements.

It is this conception of the nature and purpose of ethical enquiry which we hold to be characteristic of the British type of fact-value theory; and it is this conception which determines the type of arguments employed to establish that theory.

Section 2. Moore and the Non-naturalism of Goodness.

Exponents of the theory we are considering have employed a terminology to describe their position which finds its first expression in the PRINCIPIA ETHICA in Moore's detection of what he calls "The Naturalistic Fallacy." (1)

It is unfortunate that in Moore's treatment of "naturalism" in Ethics he seems to consider that all ethical naturalists commit the fallacy concerned, and are "naturalists" simply because they have not recognised the "fallacy." (2) This is the impression we get and yet, if this were true, it would surely follow that the dispute between naturalism and non-naturalism was a purely logical one to be cleared up by the mere exposure of a logical fallacy. However, if, on the other hand, the dispute is not based on a logical fallacy, then the non-naturalist clearly requires other arguments in order to establish his position and to refute that of his opponent. Other arguments are not lacking in Moore but it remains the case that once we have realised that the identification of the "naturalist fallacy" is not a refutation of naturalism, then this, together with the failure of Moore to provide a satisfactory description of what he means by "naturalistic character", does reduce considerably the impression of

/of cogency in Moore's position. A far more detailed exposition of arguments in favour of non-naturalism in ethics is given by Dr. A.C. Ewing in the DEFINITION OF THE GOOD (1) and our main concern will be with these arguments.

A word, however, must first be said about the "naturalistic fallacy". Briefly, the fallacy consists in mistaking an invariable accompaniment of the quality goodness for that quality itself. For example, we should be committing the naturalistic fallacy if, believing that pleasure alone was good we assumed that pleasure was identical with goodness, and that "good" simply meant pleasure. Moore describes the fallacy (2) as a confusion of good with something "other" than good. The use of the term "fallacy" however suggests that the "confusion" is of a special sort; that we have here some fallacious thought process. And what Moore seems to be saying is that the fallacy consists in arguing, from, for example, the "premiss" "pleasure alone is good" to the "conclusion" - "Good is identical with pleasure". His point is that some people want to hold at one and the same time, a) that the statement "Pleasure alone is good" is a significant statement giving us positive information about the value of pleasure and, b) that pleasure is identical with good. Clearly this cannot be done; we must either accept (b)

/(b) thereby rejecting the positive import of (a) (for it now becomes pleasure alone is pleasure) or we must reject (b) and recognise that this statement about <u>what sort of thing</u> is good, contributes nothing to the intelligible content of the <u>notion of goodness</u>. The naturalistic fallacy is, according to Moore a case of confusing the two questions "What is the nature of goodness?" and "What things are good?" (1)

Moore has admitted (2) that in the PRINCIPIA ETHICA he offered no satisfactory account of what he meant by "natural" as applied to things or characteristics. When, however, we consider the use which Moore makes of the term "naturalistic fallacy" we realise that, in the first stage of his argument the failure to say clearly what he means by "natural" is of no vital importance. For in his treatment of "Metaphysical Ethics" (3) he tells us that it too is based on the naturalistic fallacy even although, as he also tells us, metaphysics deals with objects which are <u>not</u> natural objects. (4) We are forced to conclude therefore that the "fallacy" is <u>one</u> thing, the "naturalism" another. It is not because "naturalism" identifies good with a natural object or characteristic that it is fallacious: it is fallacious because it identifies good with something "other than" good. It is not because "naturalism" reduces ethics to an empirical or positive science that it is "fallacious"; it is so because in substituting for the

/the object of thought "good" another object of thought, it destroys the "autonomy" of ethics. This brings us back to Moore's original assumption that the autonomy of ethics requires not simply that an aspect of the real be isolated and considered "apart" in thought, but that the real itself should contain as "really separate" what the mind considers separately.

The reason why the "confusion" of one thing with another in ethics deserves a special name is twofold: 1. It is, Moore thinks, a common mistake to confuse "good" with a natural object or characteristic and in fact such a confusion lies at the basis of certain historical ethical theories - e.g. those of Bentham and Mill. 2. It is a particularly serious confusion because value predicates (or at least certain of these viz. those of intrinsic value) are so unlike all other predicates that to confuse them with <u>anything</u> other than themselves is to incur the danger of radically falsifying our view of the universe. (1)

However, it is clear that this second point which is, in fact, central to Moore's conception of the autonomy of ethics carries us further than the assumption that for the autonomy of every science we require an "object" distinct in thought from other objects, and not to be confused with other "objects." It carries us further than

/then the truism which he quotes on his title page - "Every thing is what is is and not another thing": for this is a truism involved in the very employment of thought and merely states that the exercise of thought about an "object" requires that thought should be able to identify the object it is thinking about. It does not, however, enable thought directly to pronounce on the ontological status of its object. Even if "good" were analysable in naturalistic terms it would remain true that "good" was analysable in those terms and not in others - that it was what it was and not another thing (or other things).

It is therefore clear that here we are dealing with an "unlikeness" between value predicates and other predicates which is not merely the "unlikeness" or "difference" implied by the statement "everything is what it is and not another thing."

But if so we are entitled to ask for the evidence on which this position is based. And it seems that in the last resort we are forced to conclude that for Moore value predicates carry on their face a uniqueness whereby whatever is "qualified" by them is constituted in a distinct and separate realm from everything which is not so qualified. Alongside the realm of facts, there is the realm of values. (1)

When we say that value predicates "carry on their face" a uniqueness we do not mean that such uniqueness is necessarily evident to the unreflecting mind. But what we do mean is that in the last resort the uniqueness of value predicates cannot be demonstrated, but only "shown forth". To do this we may employ logical devices, revealing for example the fallacies in Bentham and Mill, but all the time what we are really working on is the "notion of good" which, so it would seem, will reveal its uniqueness to us if only we are patient and behave in a logically correct manner. Under these conditions we will reach an intuitive insight into the nature of goodness as simple and non-natural.

But here we return to our previous difficulty: what new information have we on the "uniqueness" of value predicates?: good is not the only simple predicate. But to say it is the only "non-natural" predicate is merely to say it is different from every other predicate, unless we give certain positive information about all natural predicates. And it is precisely at this point that Moore confesses himself still unclear as to what exactly is the difference between a "natural" property and a non-natural property. (1) But while Moore is unclear as to how the difference is to be described he is convinced that there is a difference and an ultimate difference between "fact"

/"fact" and value and that an adequate account of the universe must contain both statements of fact and statements of value and that the latter can in no way be inferred from, or reduced to, the former. No statement about what is the case, or is taking place, or will be the case or take place; no statement about what must occur according to causal laws, can ever express or ground a statement of intrinsic value.

This is the position which Moore takes up against the "naturalist". It is, in the last resort based upon inspection of the "notion of good", and on the intuitive conviction of the "uniqueness" of this predicate. The weaknesses of Moore's position against a consistent naturalist have been shown by A.N. Prior in LOGIC AND THE BASIS OF ETHICS (1) and we shall not deal with them here, except to point out that it seems to us that from Moore's point of view the central point of dispute must be the question, "Do I or do I not have a clear, distinct idea of a unique property signified by "good"? If the naturalist replies that he does not, then, it seems that there is nothing that Moore can do. Moore's arguments against the naturalists presuppose that "good" is the name of a characteristic and that when employed in a certain sense (viz. as meaning intrinsic value) always signifies the same characteristic. The naturalist can

/can dispute this; he may, for instance give an account of the linguistic history of the word which reveals a flexibility sufficient to account for our dissatisfaction with any one particular proposed naturalistic definition. Or again, the question may be raised as to whether good is the name of a characteristic at all. And it must be noted that Moore has himself recently considered this question and expresses himself doubtful over the correct answer. (1) To raise this issue at this point, however, would be to obscure the naturalist-non-naturalist dispute, as this latter is envisaged by Moore. It may be agreed that the theory that so-called ethical propositions are not propositions at all, is an effort to "turn the flank" of the naturalist-non-naturalist dispute. (2) For if such terms as "good" or "right" are not in their ethical function the names of characteristics at all, then there is no place for the dispute which Moore has dealt with under the term "non-natural" and "natural".

Conclusion.

Limiting ourselves to the dispute as it is envisaged by Moore we may draw attention to certain metaphysical and epistemological implications which follow from Moore's account.

1) According to Moore "good" is the name of a real characteristic, that is to say, "good things" or "value-facts" form part of the universe. The concept of good is, however, indefinable and unique. And by "unique" is here meant not simply that the concept of good has a content which is identifiable with itself and distinct from the content of any other concept, but that it is itself so unlike all other concepts which we employ in describing the universe that not only is it not definable in terms of other concepts, but there is, as it were, no common ground between it and those other concepts. If, however, the mind can discover no wider intelligible unity within which to bring together value concepts and the other concepts through which it grasps and renders intelligible to itself the universe of its experience, it follows that it must either, (a) question the power of its own activity to reach the really real, i.e., it must rest in an agnosticism based on idealistic premisses - this is clearly incompatible with Moore's realism, or (b) it must admit into the real a radical dichotomy between value situations and factual situations. But, as Ewing says, "Unless he is convinced that metaphysics is impossible, a philosopher should aspire to some view that at least indicates some systematic connection

/connection between value and reality.....It is difficult to suppose that the ultimate solution is simply that there happen to be two different kinds of facts, facts of existence and facts of value side by side and that there is no explanation or anything more to be said about it". (1)

2) According to Moore the two statements that good is unique and that it is not definable " amount to this: that propositions about the good are all of them synthetic and none of them analytic" (2). If then there are, as Moore holds, a number of intrinsic goods, it follows that the propositions which "list" these intrinsic goods must each one of them be "synthetic a priori". Thus Moore's treatment of the concept of good brings to the forefront the question of the "synthetic a priori", which has claimed so much attention from certain contemporary philosophers, including Ewing.

3) Moore shares the neo-realist view that the philosopher's task is not to justify our knowledge by a critique of the knowing power: the philosopher's concern is to make clear to us what it is that we already know. And this is done by the analysis of terms and of the structure of the propositions in which we express our knowledge. Now, if by "epistemology" we

/we mean the clarification of ideas, concepts and propositions then we must say that Moore's whole approach and treatment of the fundamental questions of Ethical enquiry is epistemological. In this sense of the term "epistemology" we can say that, in the case of Moore, "meta-ethics" signifies primarily epistemology. There is, however, another sense in which the latter term is employed, namely, as signifying the study of the conditions governing the subject's cognitive activity with a view to determining the nature and possible extent of human knowledge. In this sense of the term we must say that Moore's work is strictly non-epistemological, since, as we have said, in his view the task of the philosopher is not to tell us <u>what</u> knowledge <u>is</u>, or how our knowledge may be justified, but to clarify for us what it is that we know. In this narrower sense of "epistemology", however, there is one implication of Moore's treatment which we must note: this is the question of the nature of the acquaintance which we have with non-natural characteristics, like good. These characteristics are not open to sensible inspection. Has, then, the human mind a non-sensible type of perception? Again, this same question arises in connection with our knowledge of synthetic <u>a priori</u> propositions. In these propos-

/propositions the mind is not led, in its very conception of the subject to think the predicate; it would seem, therefore, that the connection between them must be seen by an act which is separate from the acts in which the subject and predicate are conceived. How are we to describe this act? What is its cognitive status? Moore is careful to avoid giving us the appearance of answering such questions. Thus, he insists that when he calls the propositions concerning what is intrinsically good "intuitions", he means "merely to assert that they are incapable of proof; I imply nothing whatever as to the manner of our cognition of them" (1). Nevertheless it seems to us that we cannot avoid such questions, and, as we shall see, the problem of non-sensible perception, or "intuition" occupies an important place in Ewing's epistemological theory.

In attempting, in the brief space of a short chapter, to give an account of Moore's conception of the naturalist-non-naturalist controversy, we realise that there are many points on which a more detailed study of Moore's thought would throw light. We have, however, chosen to centre our examination of this controversy on the work of A.C. Ewing, and we therefore wish it to be understood that we include this chapter

/chapter only by reason of the historical importance of Moore's presentation of the naturalist-non-naturalist dispute. We shall not, therefore, attempt to apply here the results of our examination of the Thomist theory of the intelligibility of being, beyond noting that in the first and third of the implications of Moore's position we can detect views which are in fundamental disagreement with two of the basic Thomist theories, namely, (1) that there is a "first principle" governing all knowledge, through which <u>everything</u> that is real must be viewed, and (2) that all human knowledge involves a conceptual element.

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(1) D. of G., Preface.

(2) P.E. Ch.I, Section 15; D. of G. p. 145, p. 78, p. 48; see also Moore, Philosophical Studies, London 1922, pp. 330, and 339.

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(1) See, for example, Moore's remarks in Reply to My Critics, in The Philosophy of G.E. Moore, Chicago 1942, pp. 581, 582.

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(1) P.E. pp. 13, 14, p. 18, p. 20, etc.

(2) P.E. p. 39.

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(1) Especially in Chs. I and II.

(2) P.E. p. 13.

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(1) P.E. p. 38.

(2) The Philosophy of G.E. Moore, p.582.

(3) P.E. Ch. IV.

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(2) See the broadcast talk of W. Barnes, Logical Positivism and Ethics, printed in The Listener, Jan. 30th, 1950.

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(1) P.E. p.x.

CHAPTER III. THE EPISTEMOLOGICAL BASIS OF DR. EWING'S NON-NATURALISM.

Introduction.

The importance of considering the epistemological basis of Ewing's non-naturalism may be shown by noting briefly the form in which he himself views his position in relation to the naturalists. In THE DEFINITION OF GOOD (1) he describes the ethical theory which he supports as "the view that, besides any elements which could be analysed in psychological terms or other terms appertaining to a natural science, ethical propositions include at least one concept which cannot be thus analysed." This view he describes as the alternative to the naturalist view, from which we can conclude that Ewing regards the difference between his own theory and that of the naturalist's as concerning the intelligible content of the statements under consideration and not their formal character as a whole. Thus Ewing is presupposing that his opponents agree with him on the general nature of ethical statements as being in the strict sense propositions, capable of truth and falsity. The terms of these propositions function as descriptive of an objective state of affairs and if they have any other function, e.g. emotive, this function is irrelevant to the meaning of the proposition as ethical.

It is clear that, by this implicit delimitation of the field of reference, Ewing excludes from his direct attack against "naturalism" any theory which insists on considering the emotive or expressive functions of their terms as intrinsic to the significance of ethical statements as ethical. In the previous chapter we pointed out that to introduce into the naturalist-non-naturalist dispute, as that is envisaged by Moore, the question of emotive or expressive theories would be misleading, since Moore envisages this dispute as concerned with the correct analysis of objective qualities (1). However, while Ewing does, as we have pointed out, represent his own position in similar terms to those employed by Moore, it will become clear that he cannot, in fact, limit the field of his opponents to those who are "naturalists", in Moore's sense of the term. And the reason for this is that while Moore resolutely refrains from the direct raising of epistemological questions (in the narrower sense of the term), Ewing's whole approach is epistemological. This difference is of fundamental importance, for, as we hope to show, considered from the epistemological point of view, there is a connection between "naturalism" and theories of the Expressive type (2) such that a satisfactory refutation of the former cannot be

/be completed without taking into account its more critical development in the form of the expressive theory. It will become evident in the course of this chapter and more directly in chapter IV that once emphasis in the naturalist-non-naturalist debate is placed on arguments of an epistemological nature we are necessarily carried beyond limits of the debate as those were envisaged by Moore, and that we cannot limit our study to "naturalism" to the exclusion of theories of the Expressive type. We hope to show that the attempt to offer, in the place of "naturalism" a form of non-naturalist objectivism which does not adequately meet the demand of a critical epistemology will only serve to strengthen the force of the expressive theory, for the latter appears, in part at least, to be the result of dissatisfaction with naturalism: (1) it may thus be the case that a form of non-naturalism, like Moore's or Ewing's not only fails to carry conviction in itself but also, indirectly pleads the cause of a theory much more radically opposed to it than is the "classical" naturalism of such writers as Spencer and Westermarck.

Section 1. A Priori Knowledge and the "Critical" Problem.

According to the theory of non-naturalism all ethical propositions reveal, over and above those elements which display a sensible origin, the presence of an "object of thought" or concept which lacks all trace of such derivation. Viewed in this light the theory bears directly on the question of the function of thought in human cognition. Is thought "the handmaid of the senses", limited in its power to ordering according to its own formal laws the material delivered to it by the senses, or has it a positive role to play in our knowledge and its development? Can it reveal to us objects and truths which transcend the data of the senses? In defending non-naturalism and in claiming that we do know certain ethical truths Ewing clearly rejects the empiricist alternative. Our task is to determine what form of non-empiricism Ewing accepts and to examine the arguments whereby he establishes his position.

At the outset of this enquiry we are, however, faced by a problem. Does Ewing really consider that any proof is required of the positive function of thought in the acquisition of knowledge? For it seems clear that the existence of a priori knowledge is in itself sufficient

/sufficient evidence for the positive function of thought in cognition. If it is a fact that we can sometimes know that one proposition entails another or one characteristic necessarily involves another (1) this in itself reveals that we are not limited in our knowledge to the mere "recording" of sense data.

Unless therefore it is considered necessary to prove that we can have a priori knowledge it would seem that the simple observation of the fact that this knowledge exists is itself sufficient evidence for the positive function of thought in cognition. No proof of this latter is required: the function of thought is self-evident. We have but to observe certain phenonema, nmmely, cases of a priori knowledge.

Now, there are certain indications in Ewing's work which strongly suggest this point of view. In the first place, if we consider his remarks in IDEALISM (2) on a priori concepts and on the possibility of knowing the truth of a priori propositions we are struck by the strictly empirical method of treatment; he lists "some indubitable examples" of a priori concepts and he is content to establish the possibility of a priori truths by the negative argument that we can find no "general a priori objection" to this possibility. His view seems to be that no a priori limits can be set on our a priori

/a priori knowledge and that we must just wait and see: each case must be taken on its own evidence. There is no such thing as a general explanation and justification of the possibility of such knowledge. In the second place, we have in his paper on the Linguistic Theory of A Priori Propositions (1) the explicit assertion: "I have no explanation of a priori knowledge to offer, nor do I think it requires one, any more than empirical knowledge. I merely accept it as a fact that we can sometimes know that one proposition entails another or one characteristic necessarily involves another. Why should we not have the power of seeing this, as we seem to have?" Thus, limiting ourselves to this quotation it would seem that, according to Ewing, the theory which opposes empiricism and which asserts that "we have knowledge of some universal characteristics or relations which cannot be discovered by mere analysis of what is observed or be reduced to characteristics or relations thus discoverable", (2) is established by simply "looking at the facts"; by pointing to examples of a priori knowledge from different spheres. (3)

However, if Ewing insists that he has no "explanation" of a priori knowledge to offer, and that none is needed, he does, nevertheless, spend much time in

/in defending the view that a priori knowledge is what it "seems to be", against certain theories which contain what is, in his view, a false interpretation of this knowledge, or of the propositions which are employed to express it. The two important contexts in which this question is discussed are, (1) His arguments against Kantian Idealism, and, (2) his arguments against the Linguistic Theory of A Priori Propositions. From these we can gather Ewing's own view on what a priori knowledge "seems to be", and, in fact, according to him, is. While agreeing with Kant that all knowledge requires the co-operation of thought and sense (1) Ewing criticises him for tracing back the source of the a priori to the thinking subject. According to Ewing, the distinction which Kant makes between the a priori elements and the empirical elements in our thpught about the real is unjustified: both these elements find their source in the real; and it is correct to say that both are "given" or discovered. In this connection Ewing is prepared to admit a non-sensible form of direct cognitive contact with the real which he calls "non-perceptual intuition" (2). He also refers to the correctness of widening the notion of "experience" in order to admit into the "given" those elements of the real which are not open to sensible inspection (3).

These remarks are sufficient to indicate that in Ewing's view a priori knowledge is knowledge of a reality which remains unaffected by the cognitive relation we have to it. He may thus be said to defend a "realist" interpretation of knowledge, and, in particular, what may be called a "realism of the a priori".

With regard to the Linguistic Theory of a priori propositions what he may be said to be defending is the view that a priori knowledge is knowledge of the real - which is, indeed, what it, and all knowledge, "seems to be". According to the Linguistic Theory the necessity which characterises the propositions expressing "a priori knowledge"is not grounded in the "intelligible content" of the terms of such propositions, but is due, (1) to an initial arbitrary decision regarding the usage of certain words (i.e., those which appear as terms in the necessary proposition), and (2) to the purely formal requirement of consistency by which we "must" observe our original definition under pain of talking nonsense (1). It follows that, for this theory, the necessity of such propositions can in no way be viewed as reflecting a characteristic of the real order. Indeed, such propositions give us, and can give us no information about the real world, and, conversely, they remain unaffected by what is present or is not present in that world.

Perhaps Ewing's most serious objection to this theory is his argument that, in fact, employing as a priori proposition as a premiss it is sometimes possible to obtain new "information" about something which is given in sensible experience, without having to wait on experience to reveal this new aspect of the real to us. In this connection Ewing talks about "synthetic connection" in the real, and of the mind's power to "see" this connection. "This synthetic connection cannot be either explained or explained away but must be accepted as a fact for it is itself the foundation of all inference and so of all explanation"(1). According to Ewing the synthetic connection which lies at the base of inference leading to new knowledge of the real is, in each specific case, seen to hold between "objective characteristics" as such, and we are thus able to form "synthetic a priori propositions" which, in conjunction with a minor premiss stating that what is given in experience "instantiates" the "objective characteristic" referred to in the first term of the major premiss, enables us to conclude that this same experienced object possesses the "objective characteristic" referred to in the second term of the synthetic a priori proposition.

Against the holders of the Linguistic Theory Ewing thus argues that their interpretation fails to explain

/explain the fact of inference leading to new knowledge of the real, and that this fact can only be accounted for if we interpret the terms of a priori propositions as concepts with intelligible content such that the mind can "find its way" from one concept to the other. Ewing has other more direct criticisms of this theory, but we may note here that this present general objection does show us in what sense it is true that Ewing accepts a priori knowledge, and does not, in fact, question that it is "what it seems to be". Thus in this objection he is assuming that the "truths" we reach by means of logical inference do, in fact, furnish us with new knowledge, which, while it is knowledge of the same reality as that which is revealed in sensible experience, is, nevertheless, independent of this experience for its validity. But since this is precisely what is denied by the holders of the Linguistic Theory it seems to us that the objection begs the issue. Those whom he is criticising might quite well say that "a priori knowledge" does "seem to be" what Ewing says it is, and they might agree that we "seem to see" logical connections between the material provided by the senses, but they would say that we are not justified in assuming that things are as they seem to be, and that thought has, as it seems to have, a

/a positive function to play in contributing to and advancing our knowledge of the real. Indeed, we might say that they agree with Kant in admitting that there is a "critical problem" (though they would disagree with his solution), and that we cannot dogmatically assert that what seems clear to thought, or, what thought sees clearly, is true of the real. This is the grave sin of rationalism.

This brings us to a point of fundamental importance in the correct understanding of Ewing's epistemology. It seems to us that, in his attack on empiricism, Ewing never rises above the dogmatic level in the above sense of the term. Moreover, it is important to note that this dogmatism is not limited to the thought aspect of knowledge, but extends to the sense aspect. Indeed, we get the impression that the movement of Ewing's thought is by analogy from the "reality-value" of what is given in sensible experience to the "reality-value" of what is "discovered" by intellectual perception or intuition. There is, as it were, no more need to question the validity of what we seem to see intellectually than there is to question the validity of what we seem to see perceptually: if "reality-value" is allowed to the latter it ought not to be withheld from the former. Ewing does, in fact, employ an ad hominem argument of this sort against

/against his empiricist adversaries in THE DEFINITION OF GOOD (1). We shall have occasion to question the force of this type of argument in the following chapter: what we must note here is that Ewing's "dogmatic" approach seems to bring with it the threat of a division of thought and sense into two separate and independent principles of knowledge, each in itself capable of founding a complete cognitive act.

Section 2. Thought and Sense.

In Section 2 of Chapter I we attempted to explain in what sense St. Thomas considered that the co-operation of thought and sense was necessary for human knowledge. According to him we have no direct contact with the real which is not sensible contact. But this sensible contact is not itself knowledge: we require thought (or intellect) in order that this sensible contact should become significant as witnessing to the presence of the real before us. For St. Thomas, therefore, all knowledge involves the activity of thought in the sense that only by this activity can the "data" of the senses be raised to the status of revealing to us a value of the real; and we know that in this activity thought is measured by the absolute measure of the transcendental notion of being. Thought and sense, then, for St. Thomas, are two aspects of com-

/components of the cognitive act, and neither, considered separately and in isolation from the other, can be treated as a sufficient ground of an act of knowledge; neither, in itself can be said to reveal the real, or a part of the real to us; the real is revealed to us only in and by their co-operation.

Now, Ewing might seem to support this type of conception of the co-operation of thought and sense in the cognitive act, for he says that thought is necessary for knowledge since "we cannot have content without form, and this form cannot be discovered by merely receiving sense-impressions passively" (1). But it becomes clear that he treats the activity of thought as being, in the last resort, a vision or "seeing" of "objects" which in effect differs only from sensible "seeing" or perceiving in that it delivers to the mind an intellectual or non-sensible "object". He argues, for example (2) that thought is necessary for knowledge for thought alone can "see" the necessary connections which exist or subsist between certain sensible elements in the real. Thought, we may say, is necessary in order to re-organise the empirical contents which are received according to the temporal and spatial orders of our perception, and it does so in the light of the necessary relations or connections which it sees in the real. But

/But thought is not necessary in order to render what is given in sensible experience revealing of the real. The sensible content has its own reality-value in and by itself. Thus, although Ewing may be said to contrast the activity of thought with the passivity of sense, his actual account of the role of thought in cognition shows us that the real contrast is not here but in the respective "objects" delivered by, or revealed by, thought and sense. It is, in effect, by their "objects" that the latter are distinguished, and such a distinction leads to a juxtaposition and a real separation of what, in the Thomist view, are two aspects of one act, namely, the act of cognition. Ewing seems to view thought and sense as standing side by side on the same level, each occupied with its own part of the real, and each equipped to deal with this part on its own, and without the co-operation of the other.

The implication of such a view, however, is to alter the status of thought and sense from that of aspects of one complex but unitary act to the status of separate and sufficient principles, each founding its own act; so that the distinction between thought and sense becomes a distinction between two kinds of knowledge, "sensible" knowledge, and "intellectual" knowledge, each being con-

/considered as a type of direct experiental contact with the real in which the conceptual activity of thought has no part to play.

This, however, presents us with an entirely different conception of the co-operation of thought and sense than that found in St. Thomas' theory, for we can no longer say that neither thought nor sense can by itself reveal the real to us: all we can say is that neither of them alone can be considered as revealing all, or the whole of, the real to us - but we must add that each is capable in its own sphere of revealing the real. This, however, brings us before a difficulty: if thought and sense are each occupied exclusively with their own "objects", and if each is, in its own sphere, sufficient to guarantee the "reality value" of its "objects" how can we talk about these two kinds of objects as belonging to one and the same real order? With such a conception of the relation of thought and sense in cognition we very easily fall into a type of Platonic idealism in which sense and thought each deliver to us their own type of object and no satisfactory account can be given of the relationship in the real between the two "worlds" of sensible experience and intelligible ideas.

Section 3. The Realism of the A Priori.

However, it is clear that Ewing does not envisage such a division of thought and sense as would lead to the erection of two separate real worlds. For Ewing it is the one world which is revealed to us in sensible experience which is also characterised by those necessary connections which thought "sees". The real possesses both "empirical" and "a priori" elements, but these are elements of one real order and it is of this order that our true a priori propositions give us knowledge.

The question we must now ask, then, is how far Ewing is successful in proving that our a priori knowledge is about one and the same "real world" as is revealed to us in sensible experience. It is in this sense that we wish the phrase, "the realism of the a priori" to be understood. As we have said (pp.81-82) there are two contexts in which Ewing deals with the question of a priori knowledge of the real, and we shall consider two arguments, one (A) drawn from his examination of Kantian Idealism (1), and the other (B), found in his criticism of the Linguistic Theory of A Priori Propositions (2).

A. Knowledge of a Truth of Euclidean Geometry.

Ewing writes (1), "the empirical content given may and, if inference be possible at all, must sometimes have features which lead beyond itself". And the example he gives in illustration of this contention is a mathematical one:-

"I discover by considering a particular triangle that its angles must be together equal to two right angles, and I see that in making this inference I have included in my premisses neither the particular size of the angles of this particular figure nor the fact that I or anybody else have seen the triangle, therefore the inference is valid of all triangles, whether perceived or not."

Here Ewing seems to distinguish two "moments" in the process whereby a universally necessary proposition is established.

a. The discovery that the angles of this particular triangle must be together equal to two right angles.

b. The realisation that this "truth" is independent of the contingent circumstance, and therefore is true of all triangles. It is important to ask what are the relative statuses of those two "moments." Are they psychological moments analysed out of what is in fact

/fact one cognitive act, or are they two cognitive acts connected as premiss and conclusion?

We may say, in the first place, that one of the reasons, so it seems, for distinguishing these two "moments" is to maintain the view that all knowledge involves empirical elements, and thus to provide the test whereby the critical value of the a priori elements may be established. It remains to be seen, however, what is meant here by "involve". For Ewing's purpose it would seem that this must be interpreted "containing empirical propositions." We might, therefore, be inclined to interpret the first "moment" as an empirical proposition. (It has for its subject, apparently, "This particular triangle.")

Nevertheless we realise at once that it is a peculiar sort of empirical proposition, for it is not stating a "matter of fact" but a "necessity" ("must") and as such this proposition differs radically from, for example, the proposition "This triangle is big."

To this Ewing may reply, "Yes, it is different, but who can deny it, and on what grounds are you justified in refusing to call it empirical, unless you start off with the gratuitous assumption (Kant's) that what is given is totally disconnected. My whole contention is that in what is offered to the mind you sometimes "see"

/"see" that one empirical element "leads beyond itself". Thus, in my example, I see that the characteristic of triangleness, which is empirically given (I am seeing this triangle) leads beyond itself, or carries with it, the characteristic of "having angles which together equal two right angles."

In order to evaluate this reply we must turn to the second "moment" which is apparently complex containing a reflection on the irrelevance of any of the particular (individuating) notes of "this particular triangle" to the first inference; and, secondly, the inferential judgment that therefore the first proposition is true of all triangles, i.e. I can conclude to an a priori universal proposition which delivers to me knowledge of what is not experienced by me.

Now, there is indeed a sense in which the first judgment may be said to be evidence for the ultimate "conclusion" - viz. reflecting on the evidence for it I see that in this I have not included "the particular size of the angles."

But it seems to us that this reflection amounts to the realisation of the irrelevance of what precisely makes this triangle to be a particular triangle i.e. its "individuating notes." And we may ask in what sense we can say that a triangle of no particular size etc. can

/can be given in experience. That is to say, it is not, in fact, the "triangleness" of this particular triangle (for as such it would be the individual triangle) which leads beyond itself, but the "isolate" or abstract characteristic of "triangledness" as such, and what it leads beyond to is another abstract characteristic or "isolate". Thus the original proposition is not empirical. In other words, it is the realisation that, in fact, the original judgment is not merely empirical that enables the "inference" to be made. And when we say "not merely empirical" we mean, not that it contains other than empirical elements, but that in fact the truth of what is asserted is independent of the empirical elements and bears not on them, but on "isolates."

This seems to amount to the realisation that in fact the empirical elements have no more than a psychological function to fulfil, and that what we have is one complex and exclusively intellectual cognition. It's object is what is called an "abstract truth", which expresses a certain relation between two "isolates" considered apart from their manifestation in a particular concrete existent. The relationship between the apprehension of this abstract truth, and the "inference" to the universally necessary proposition is we suggest that of expressing the concrete consequences of the

/the abstract truth. (1)

(If our interpretation is correct it is misleading of Ewing to call the first proposition empirical, or to imply that it is. We may be unfair in forcing him to do so. He would probably say not that it is empirical, but that it is "given in experience". The same equivocation is apparent in THE DEFINITION OF GOOD, (2) in connection with the sense in which ethical ideas are empirical. But it seems to us that this shift in phraseology begs the question, which is precisely whence does the mind draw the power to assert abstract propositions. It is clear that their terms do not exist in the concrete universe - in what really exists or is real. It is clear that they are at least in part due to an activity on the part of the mind. (3) How justify critically this activity? To say that the propositions embodying them are self-evident is not to give an answer to this problem.)

What Ewing says concerning the form of a priori propositions helps us to enforce our criticism and to bring out our difficulties. Ewing says (4) that we do not know affirmative categorical a priori propositions, but only hypothetical ones, "though, granted emprical premisses we can use a priori hypothetical propositions

/propositions to draw categorical affirmative conclusions." (1) That this should be the case is explicable if, in fact, our pure a priori propositions are in fact "abstract truths." For if we consider the manner in which the mind can hold together or link two "isolates" we see that this can only be in the form of an "if.....then" proposition. For in all propositions there is the bringing together or synthesising of elements into a unity of relation. We may therefore ask what sort of "togetherness" or "conjunction" can be exhibited by two "isolates"; according to what form can their unity of relation be expressed? If they are conjoined they must be conjoined in a way compatible with their nature, and their nature is to be "isolated" from all concrete context. Consequently the proposition which states their relation cannot directly refer to the real existential order, or to what has significance only in that order. The proposition cannot refer to the existential situation as providing the "background" within which it relatesits terms, and within which this relation holds. (e.g. space continuum for spatial relations: the whole concrete subject for an individual subject-predicate proposition.) It must be the relationship itself which forms the focal point round which the iso-

/isolates are held. In other words, the proposition which holds together the two isolates must itself be relational in form. Only thus can it present the conjunction of two isolates. A proposition stating the togetherness of two isolates will then be of the form, If....then. It may be objected at this point that propositions are the expression of judgment and that all judgment is a "taking up of position in the face of being": that in all judgment there is the assertion that the relation in which the terms are held is really true - true"of reality." Without questioning the truth of this we hold that it is still possible to distinguish between a direct reference, and an indirect reference, and that this is precisely the distinction between hypothetical and categorical propositions - or, at least, that this is the way that these two forms of propositions may be distinguished vis à vis the act of judgment which they express. For if we take the abstract truth and formulate it categorically we may say that it is the expression of the judgment Aness goes along with or is conjoined with Bness. But we are all agreed (at least Ewing agrees with us) that "abstractions do not exist by themselves." (1) Therefore the knowledge of an abstract truth does not justify me in asserting that an instance of the conjunction it asserts

/asserts really exists. Consequently with regard to the reality - reference of my judgment it can only consist in saying If an instance of A is given, then an instance of B exists. But this gives us no direct information about the real order.

It might be said that with this interpretation of the nature of "entailment" we have given Ewing what he wants - i.e. the necessity of an empirical element if we are to make categorical necessary propositions. For once sensible experience provides us with an instance of Aness we can go on to infer a necessary conclusion about reality. He might claim that in this way (by insisting that pure a priori propositions are hypothetical in form) he has avoided erecting a world of Platonic essences whose necessary connections can be asserted directly and categorically, and that he has thus avoided the pitfall of a "second world" of intelligible essences alongside (and in very obscure relation) to the world of sensible existents. It can, however, be maintained that he has still retained if not intelligible essences at least intelligible relations whose relationship to the sensible universe is equally obscure.

But what we want to emphasise is that, in fact, nothing that Ewing has told us about the formation of a priori propositions is sufficient to enable him to

/to break the barrier between the "a priori" and the sensible; between what is known a priori and the concrete existential order.

We have dealt in detail with his example for the following reasons :-

1. To show that, in fact, as he describes it, the activity of thought which gives us knowledge of a mathematical a priori proposition requires no more than psychological help from sensible experience.

2. To show that, in fact, the hypothetical nature of pure a priori propositions can be explained merely by considering the nature of propositions and judgments as such, together with the epistemological status of "isolates."

Consequently, the fact that such propositions are hypothetical in character does not directly support the view that the real world is logical in character. I.e. Because my awareness of the conjunction of two isolates must be expressed in the form If A, then B, this does not justify me in concluding that the real world must in itself exhibit such logical connection. In fact, what is specifically logical in the relation viz. entailment, characterises the "isolates" as such, and the question is not so much whether the real world can

/can contradict this relation, which is really without sense, but whether at any point a bridge can be thrown between the logical or ideal world and the real world. There is indeed nothing in the pure a priori proposition which would justify me in inferring that there is ever given an instance which realises in concreteo what we have seen to be true in abstracto. This is particularly important because Ewing himself says that "we may see that what implies B in a particular case is neither the particular Aness of A....., but some generic property C." (1) The critical phrase is "we may see", for, in fact, we do only "see" in cases where the objects of thought are fully present to the mind, and wholly intelligible to it. (2) This would seem to limit the field of possibilities to mathematics and logic (for Ewing does not, so it would seem, consider "being" an intelligible notion within which it may be possible to discover a structure of relationships, which we should call metaphysical).

Such a limitation is both significant and unfortunate. It is significant for our argument in that it is precisely in the sphere of mathematics and logic that the "myth" of an "ideal world" most easily takes root. The "entities" of mathematics reveal a consist-

consistency and intelligibility of their own sufficient, it might be said, to satisfy the mind's desire for certitude and intelligibility in all but its most deep rooted metaphysical drive towards the concrete existent. And in a somewhat similar way, in the mind's knowledge of its own "laws of thought" it would seem to reach a point of certitude and clarity which cannot be surpassed, were it not again, for the knowledge which it has of its finitude and dependence in the act of knowledge.

This limitation is also unfortunate for Ewing, for it is in these two fields that the logical positivist may claim most success in his effort at "dissolving" the world of "a priori" concepts. With the success of the "formalisation" of mathematical theory, the utility or even validity, of regarding the "axioms" and "concepts" as possessing intelligible content or import becomes highly suspect, and under the general movement of research into the relations between mathematics and logic, the same "formalistic" method and treatment is applied to logic itself.

B. Ewing's Argument Against the Linguistic Theory of A Priori Propositions.

This brings us to the second context in which the question of a priori knowledge of the "sensible world"

/world" is considered. In his paper to the Aristotelian Society on the Linguistic Theory of A Priori Propositions Ewing has an argument which is directly relevant to this question. The argument concerns the analysis of the proposition "A thing cannot be both red and green all over" and what he attempts to prove is that the only satisfactory account of the a priori nature of this proposition is that "we see that the objective characteristic signified by "green" is logically incompatible with the characteristic signified by "red". (1)

The theory of the nature of a priori propositions against which he is arguing is the "linguistic theory" which he describes as the theory that "a priori propositions are "true" and deductive reasoning "valid" simply because to deny the a priori proposition or to refuse to accept the reasoning would be to contradict the rules of language or to combine words in a way which according to the rules of language conveys no meaning." (2) We shall not stop to consider the accuracy of this description: Ayer himself in the Preface to the Second Edition of LANGUAGE, TRUTH AND LOGIC (3) has admitted the necessity for refining and correcting certain of his earlier statements in this matter. What is of importance in the linguistic theory is the view

/view that the necessity which characterises a priori propositions is a result not of the peculiar nature of the "objects" they are "about", but of linguistic rules, which are, at base, arbitrary. It follows from this that such propositions have no objective reference nor, a fortiori, do they give us any positive information about the experimental order of sensible occurents. They can neither be confirmed nor refuted by any fact of experience. Their basis is linguistic convention. It is this that Ewing disputes. He argues that such a theory cannot account for the fact that we know that the proposition "a thing cannot be both red and green all over" would be true in whatever language it were expressed." He argues that such knowledge would be impossible if this "rule" were simply the result of linguistic conventions concerning the usage of the words "red" and "green". For we could not know in advance of our empirical knowledge of any particular language that it must have the same linguistic conventions as we have. But we do in fact know in advance of experience that any language which has adopted certain rules in the usage of colour words - e.g. "that we must apply not "red" but "green" to things like grass in spring" (1), - this is, admittedly, an arbitrary rule - must accept as true and necessarily true the proposition "A thing cannot be both green and red all

/all over." (1) But if this proposition merely concerned the words "red" and "green" it would be impossible to know a priori that every language which had a colour word to designate grass in spring, and another colour word must accept the same rule to the effect that these two colour words must not be predicated of the same thing in the same respect. According to Ewing the only satisfactory explanation of this a priori knowledge we have concerning all languages which use colour words to designate elements in the sensible order is that this order (e.g. things like "grass in spring") is qualified by "objective characteristics" and that we "see" that, for example, the quality signified by "green" is incompatible with the quality signified by "red". (2)

In this argument Ewing is clearly appealing to the presence of the a priori in the sensible order. The concepts of green and of red are for him clearly empirical concepts. And according to him they are the basis of the necessary proposition under consideration. We have already noted that in the sphere of mathematics Ewing did not succeed in proving that necessary propositions were really concerned with the empirical order. Prima facie his position seems stronger in this example, but we must consider the reply that the logical posit-

/positivist could give to Ewing's arguments.

In the first place we might question the legitimacy of introducing "empirical concepts" into the debate. Thus it is clear that the necessity which characterises the proposition cannot be found by considering the <u>particular</u> things to which the words "red" and "green" refer. And if to this it is replied that these words do not apply to the things in their particularity, but as instances of general or universal characteristics, the logical positivist may legitimately ask for an explanation of the <u>real or critical</u> value of the concept of "green in general" or "red in general". He will himself prefer to say that the proposition is necessary in virtue of the fact that the words are both colour words. And if he is asked why we should all share the same convention about colour words, he may answer that, although it is arbitrary that we should choose to designate the real by colour-words, if we once do this we must be consistent: if our language contains two colour-words and by their means we are to describe our experience then we shall defeat our purpose if we apply both these words to the same thing, for they will each of them fail in their purpose. The logical positivist could still argue that this does not imply that the ground of the necessary distinction (reflected in the

/the proposition under consideration) lies <u>in the real</u> - in the fact that there are green things which are instances of the objective characteristic green, and red things which are instances of the objective characteristic red, and in the fact that the mind "sees" the mutual exclusion of these characteristics. He may still maintain that the real world as offered to our senses is diverse but he may argue that it is a matter of convention to decide which differences we chose to give names to. We do so in order to distinguish, and the motives which determine which distinctions are important, may vary. But any language which finds it important to give names to colour differences will reach the same "rule" as we ourselves have. On the other hand, if a language did not find such a distinction useful, then, in that case, the proposition under consideration could not be <u>translated</u>. There would be no question of whether it were or were not true in that language. It could not be expressed at all. If now the same argument were posed to the logical positivist, concerning the proposition "A thing cannot be both coloured and not-coloured all over" he might still answer that this is not concerned with reality. I might quite well not find it useful to designate reality by the word "colour". It is only once having done this (an arbitrary step) that it

/it follows necessarily that "A thing cannot be both coloured and not-coloured all over". This is because I have previously decided to use "colour" as a designator, and if I at once say "A thing is coloured and not-coloured all over" I fail to designate at all.

Ewing points out that if it be argued that the law of contradiction "only holds because its non-observance would make all language useless", one *a priori* truth which cannot be said to be dependent on linguistic convention must still be presupposed, viz. "the *a priori* truth that the law of contradiction is presupposed in all languages." (1)

However, even if this point is conceded it may be questioned whether it is of value for the purpose of Ewing's thesis against the logical positivists. According to Ewing the law of non-contradiction is itself a purely formal principle (2) and by this we may take him to mean that it concerns not the real content, the *positive* significance of propositions, but the form in which the mind orders that content. To say, therefore, that this law is presupposed in all languages, is to say that all language involves a certain formalisation (viz. a formalisation of which one of the "rules" is the principle of non-contradiction).

However, it seems clear that in the phrase "nature of language as such", the term "language" does not refer to

/to an empirical concept in the sense in which the logical positivists use the term "empirical". For we would agree that no amount of positive information about languages as empirical facts would justify the "a priori truth" that all languages presuppose the law of non-contradiction. Unless, therefore, Ewing is prepared to question the whole basis of the empiricists' account of "immediate experience" and the resultant theory of the nature of empirical concepts it seems to us that he cannot "close the gap" between the empirical and the a priori.

It is true that an explanation of this "a priori" is still required. But we cannot see how the admission of an "ideal" world of logical relations governing thought (or its expression in language) itself can provide the solution to the question.

To understand the inspiration of logical positivism we must realise that it is in great part a reaction to this type of theory. And if, in one direction it goes too far, in denying real import or critical value to a priori propositions and concepts, in another direction it does not go far enough, in that it accepts the interpretation of immediate experience which is the legacy which Kant inherited from Hume. Having accepted this however it seems to us that in "dissolving" the a priori it is

/is only being faithful to its own premisses. It seems to us that Ewing, in combining the admission of the "formality" of the principle of non-contradiction with the implicit acceptance of the empiricist view of the nature of human experience is forced to deny any <u>ontological</u> ground to this principle and this being the case he must either fall back into idealism or explain "formality" in terms of "formalisation."

Section 4. The Logic of Positive Terms and the Transcendental Notion of Being.

In this same article on the Linguistic Theory of *a priori* propositions Ewing makes a point which is of considerable importance in helping us to understand the position of his logical positivist opponents and to appreciate why we find his arguments against them ineffectual. It also enables us to throw light on our own position in relation to both of them, and for these reasons we shall devote a separate section to this question.

Ewing says that the contention that "*a priori* rules of logic are valid because they could not be denied without self-contradiction has a certain plausibility", but amongst the objections to this view he makes the following point:- "It is impossible to deduce all *a priori* propositions from the law of contradiction alone. For the law to be applied we must be able to see that certain characteristics are incompatible with each other, and from the bare law of contradiction alone one could not deduce which these would be, e.g., that red and green are such characteristics and not red and smooth or noisy." (1) According to Ewing, therefore, before we can *use* the formal law of contradiction we must be provided with certain information

/information concerning the intelligible content of certain terms, between which specific contents we see the logical relation of incompatibility. As before, we may take Ewing to mean that these terms refer to "objective characteristics". (1)

Now, we find it very difficult to understand what is meant by saying that before we can tell whether the law of contradiction applies to two given characteristics we must see that they are incompatible; that we see this in the case of red and green, and that we do not see it in the case of red and smooth. For, in fact, the incompatibility here referred to is not something like "incompatibility" of temperament as between husband and wife, or the "incompatibility" of two colours when a red blouse "does not go with" a purple skirt, but precisely logical incompatibility, and this, we suggest, means the incompatibility of two terms in both being predicated of one and the same subject. If this is so, then, Ewing's point is that the law of contradiction is in itself insufficient to tell us which terms, considered in their logical function as predicates are incompatible. If this is so, however, it is of no use to try to make good this deficiency by appealing to whatever it is that those terms really refer to, which is, for Ewing, "objective characteristics", for if we simply confine ourselves to

/to "looking at" each of those things as distinct entities, then, of each of them, all we can say is that it is itself, and that it is not any of the others. ("Everything is what it is and not another thing"). The "inspection" of "objective characteristics" is irrelevant to the question of the logical incompatibility of terms. When Ewing says that we "see" that red and green are incompatible what he is assuming is precisely that we are viewing red and green as determinates of the determinable, colour, and in their function as determinates, i.e., as determining the place of an object (viewed as the possible subject of a judgment) within the order generated by the determinable. It seems to us that it is only in this context that we can talk about logical incompatibility. If so it is clear that as such this logical relationship does not bear on the terms in their "reality reference", but on their formal characteristics as determinates placing an object within an order or scheme under a given determinable. This being the case, however, it also seems clear that the law of contradiction is sufficient to guarantee the truth of a proposition like "the same thing is never both red and green all over" (1), for the terms red and green are here being viewed in their formal aspect as determinates of a given determinable. Now, if red and

/and green are treated as determinates of the determinable, colour, then their function is to place an object ("a thing") within the order of colour. If both are employed to characterise one and the same object then this object is <u>at once identified and not identified</u> within the order, which amounts to saying that these terms have ceased to fulfil their function, and this amounts to saying that the order has itself been destroyed.

However, Ewing may still protest that it remains true that the law of contradiction does not itself <u>inform</u> us as to which terms are, and which terms are not, determinates of one and the same determinable. And this is, of course, true, but our point is that the question of logical incompatibility and compatibility <u>does not arise</u> until we view terms in their logical function of placing things in orders. If we ask how it is that red and green are logically incompatible, and that red and smooth are logically compatible the answer is that in judging that "X" is red we are viewing "X" <u>exclusively</u> under the determinable colour and giving it its place in this order; it remains an open question whether it has a place in another order - e.g. a place signified by the term, smooth.

Ewing may still, and rightly, press us for an account of how we may be said to "discover" that two terms are

/are determinates of the same determinable. But here we must be very careful to understand the nature of this question correctly, for both the term "determinate" and the term "determinable" are logical terms, and we must avoid any illicit transposition from the logical order to the real order. We must not seek in the real for anything more than is absolutely necessary in order to account for the intelligible (or "useful", as Ewing's opponents might say) employment of the determinable-determinate category in our knowledge of the real.

What is essential in the relationship of determinates to their determinable is the notion of difference within unity. The colour red, for example, differs as colour from the colour green. But the phrase "difference within unity" is itself a logical phrase, and to transpose this directly into the real order would involve hypostasising colour and treating it as the real source of the unity, the differences within it being then explained according to some theory of participation. Now it seems to us that Ewing would hesitate to consider "colour" as the name of a real subsistent entity, but it also seems to us that it is in this direction that he would be forced to go if he insisted that it is by inspection of "objective characteristics" that we see the logical incompatibility between certain terms. We must consider whether any

/any other course is open to us.

Now, when we are talking of the mind's relation to the real in knowing, it seems clear that, however we may describe this activity what is distinctive of "knowing the real" is the putting or finding of an order or orders in the diversity of the real as that is presented to us through our senses. This, however, would not be possible if what confronted us were a sheer blank diversity of individual sense. There must therefore be resemblances in the real, and of such a kind that they leave place within them for difference. But we use the phrase "putting or finding" deliberately, because while the real must be such that we can, as it were, "find" differences within unities in it, it is only when these are taken up by the mind and employed as principles governing predication that they can be said to provide us with means for "ordering" the real. In the real, for example, there are different colours, but from the point of view of explaining logical incompatibility it is sufficient to say that it is by an act of the mind that the positive terms which refer to these different colours are treated as indices of an order, viz., the order of colour. Furthermore, it does seem reasonable to agree so far with Ewing's opponents that there is a certain freedom in the choice of orders - that

/that we do to a certain extent, decide which differences within resemblances we are going to recognise and employ in our "putting of order in the real". (1).

We wish now to suggest a line of argument which Ewing might have applied with profit against his opponents. This concerns not the question of logical incompatibility, but the question of logical compatibility. If we take logical compatibility as describing the possibility of employing two terms as predicates of one and the same subject without contradiction the problem which is brought out by the above treatment of logical incompatibility is that it is not, in fact, sufficient in order to describe two terms as logically compatible to say merely that they place objects in different orders. What we must be able to say is that they place <u>one and the same object</u> in different orders, for, as we have said, two predicates like "red" and "smooth" are logically compatible if they can be predicated of one and the same subject. Thus, "red" and "smooth" are logically compatible if we can say "X (e.g. This apple) is red and smooth". On our interpretation this means that one and the same object (This apple) must be able to be placed or viewed in the two different orders generated by the determinables, colour, and texture. But

/But we must note that this possibility cannot be grounded in either of these two orders, for each of them <u>is</u> an order precisely on condition that the object is (by the law of contradiction) identified solely by the determinable concerned. The identity which each of these orders can confer is solely an identity <u>within itself</u>. But when we say that X is both red and smooth it is clear that X cannot be identified solely by "red", or solely by "smooth". Hence the identity involved in "one and the same object" cannot be the identity provided for by the particular orders of the two determinables, whose terms we describe as "logically compatible".

The notion of "one and the same object belonging to different orders" necessarily carries us above any one of these different orders and cannot be explained within them: each one of these orders is, as it were, absolute within itself, but, under pain of ruling out the possibility that more than one such order can be employed in "identifying" a given object, we must conclude that neither singly nor in <u>sum</u> (since each is absolute in its own light) can they themselves contain the ground of the <u>identity</u> (the one-and-the-sameness) of the given object. But here again, to make our position clear, we must insist that the notion of "one and the

/the same object" is, strictly speaking, a logical notion, and that, therefore, what we are arguing is that this notion, which we claim is involved in the notion of logical compatibility, cannot be accounted for within a logic of positive terms, as we have interpreted the latter. There is more to it than this, however, for we must note that if the logic of positive terms serves to mark off objects from each other, so that, for example, if we know that A is red, we know that it is different from B, which is green, it now becomes clear that if none of these orders can be considered the ground of the identity of an object which belongs to more than one of them, it is also the case that, while they can each be employed in the task of "marking off" one object from another, they cannot either singly or in sum be said to contain the ultimate ground of the difference between objects.

Our contention is that when we mark off objects from one another we always do so within a unity. We have developed this in terms of the notion of a unity of order generated by any given determinable under which positive terms are grouped, e.g., the determinable, colour, under which we place "red" and "orange". We can then say X (This apple) is different from Y (This orange) in so far as X is red and Y is orange; again, we can say X is

/is different from Y in so far as X is sweet Y is bitter, or, again in so far as X is smooth and Y is rough. But, just as none of the orders generated by the particular determinables, colour, taste, texture, can provide the condition for saying that the same X (i.e., one and the same apple) is red and sweet and smooth, and the same Y (i.e., one and the same orange) is orange and rough and bitter, so none of these orders can provide sufficient condition for saying "This (one and the same) apple is different from this (one and the same) orange". If we were limited in our predication to viewing things solely from within a number of particular orders of different determinables we should be limited to saying, "X is different from Y in colour; X is different from Y in texture; X is different from Y in taste...." But we should not, in fact, be able to say that "X" and "Y" in this series of statements stands for "one and the same object"; we should not, that is to say, be able to say that one and the same object (e.g., This apple), which is smooth and red and sweet is different from one and the same object (e.g., This orange), which is rough and orange and bitter. Thus, we have, once again, the problem of difference within unity to explain. But this difference within unity must transcend and at the same time contain

/contain the various differences within unities expressed in the logic of positive terms, for these latter unities concern determinables which are all on one level, and the orders they generate fall outside each other. The order we are seeking is one within which all particular differences of colour, taste, etc. fall, and it is one which will enable us to use the positive terms like red and smooth and sweet and orange and rough and bitter in marking off one object (This apple) from another (This orange). And here we must note that it no longer makes sense to talk about "deciding which differences we shall note", for we are no longer dealing with an order alongside other possible orders, but with an order which is and must be fundamental (however we may describe it), for it is the order which is to provide the ultimate formal requirements of logical compatibility and which is to make possible the possibility of different orders within which one and the same object may be placed. We can say, therefore, that this order must be a transcendental and immanent order, meaning by this that the place to which an object is assigned in this order (and which is the ground of the notion of "one and the same object") carries and maintains the object in its identity over and above and in and through the places (and "partial" iden-

/identities) assigned to the object in any one or a number of positive orders. This order can rightly be called <u>absolute</u> in the sense that no object is capable of being viewed as a subject of predication <u>outside of membership of this order</u>. This last point requires a certain elucidation. Our point is that <u>if</u> we view a given order, for example, the order of colour, as existing alongside other orders, then this implies that it is logically possible (whether or not, in actual fact it is the case) that one and the same object may belong at once to the order of colour <u>and to an order other than the order of colour</u>. But as we have argued, this possibility cannot be grounded in either of these orders, or in <u>any order which we treat as an order alongside other orders</u>. Hence, to be able to talk of an order in these terms, i.e., as a particular order alongside other possible orders, is to <u>presuppose</u> an absolute order within which "one and the same object" is placed, and it is only <u>this</u> absolute order which can therefore provide us with the subject in relation to which we can view the positive terms of these different particular orders as <u>predicates</u>. If, of course we treat the order of, for example, colour as absolute then it is itself sufficient to provide us with a subject of predication. But we should then be limited in the logical

/logical possibilities of predication to those positive terms which serve as indices of the order of colour. Furthermore, we must describe membership of this order as unconditional in the sense that the notion of "conditions of membership of a given order" presupposes the possibility of viewing a given object as a subject of predication outside of its membership of this given order. We then ask whether or not it possesses the characteristics necessary in order to be viewed under the given order. But, prior to membership of this absolute order, we have no possible subject of predication.

It seems to us that these requirements of the fundamental order within which we must place all differences within unity, and hence all our efforts to "order the real", are provided for by the Thomist theory of the transcendental notion of being, as we have developed this in Chapter I, and especially in Section 3 of that Chapter. (1) We there draw attention to the fact that the idea or notion of being could not be entertained by the mind outside of at least an implicit reference to a concrete object in an act of judgment (This exists). Thus, we may say that simultaneously with the notion of being there arises the notion of a subject of predication, and hence a given object becomes in the logical order a subject of predication under the notion of being. If we ask whether

/whether an object can become a subject of predication under any other notion the answer is contained in the view that "being is the first intelligible"; whatever we conceive we conceive in relation to being. To view an object as red or noisy or smooth is still and primarily to view it as being red, etc. The relevance of this in dealing with Ewing's opponents should now be clear, for what, in fact, we have argued is that they too must have a "first intelligible", in the sense of a fundamental order within which the particular orders concerned with particular positive terms may be sustained, and employed in the determination of given objects.

(2) We also drew attention there to the unique relation which holds between being, as a predicate, and that of which it is predicated. Being, as a predicate, is identical with the subject in its concrete entirety (as opposed, for example, to the redness attributed to a red rose in which attribution the identity is realised under the condition of viewing the rose from within the aspect of colour), and at the same time this predicate, being, points beyond this particular subject to other possible subjects. And we further pointed out that the unity which all objects enjoy under the notion of being can be described as a unity of order. We may now underline the unique position of this order, the order of being, in

/in relation to all other orders. It is in and through its membership of this order that any given object can be viewed as a subject of predication. To say of any given object that it "is not of this (transcendental) order" is, indeed, to employ a term familiar in the writings of Ewing's opponents, "self-stultifying", since at one and the same time we treat an object as a possible subject of predication and deny that it is a possible subject of predication. But here, at this level, no sense can be given to the idea that we ourselves <u>choose</u> to view things under this order.

(3) No object can escape from the order of being, but <u>within</u> this order each object has its own unique place which is the mark of its self-identity and its distinction from all other objects. We have said earlier in this examination that our effort to know the real is necessarily an effort to put or find order in what is given to us in experience. What is distinctive in the Thomist interpretation of this cognitive effort is that, for the Thomist, what is always being sought is the concrete existent in its place within the absolute, unconditional order of being. But for the human mind this effort is necessarily carried out at the logical level of "composition and division" (i.e., of judgments employing abstract concepts) by reason of the fact that we have no

/no direct intellectual vision (or "intuition") of the concrete existent in its very being. It is true that, in the judgment of existence, we know what is "most intimate" (1) in the given object, but we know this only in an imperfect and obscure way by means of an idea - the idea of being - which is applied to everything else that exists or has being. If, therefore, we were content to remain at this transcendental level of ordering the objects of our experience all we could say of each one of them would be that it <u>is</u>, that it is identical with itself, and distinct from all other members of the order of being. We, could indeed say that "it is what it is and not another thing", but we could not say <u>what</u> it is, and <u>in what way</u> it is not another thing. Hence we may say that this original judgment whereby an object becomes a subject of predication <u>requires and demands</u> to be complemented by other judgments bearing upon one and the/same object which will gradually "fill up" the distance between the subject ("This"), and the predicate ("is"). But none of the predicates of these other judgments can be viewed as being on a level with the predicate, being, since the precise function of these other predicates is to determine the <u>manner of being</u> of the object under consideration, i.e., the particular way in and through which it <u>is</u>, and in and through which it is distinct from other

/other beings. The terms employed, therefore, cannot be transcendental, applying to all subjects of predication as such, for they are the terms by means of which one subject of predication is to be identified by being "marked off" from other subjects of predication. We may say, therefore, that according to this theory there is need for particular non-transcendental orders, in and through which the members of the absolute and unconditional order of being may be positively identified and marked off from each other. The human mind or intellect, according to St. Thomas, "has to gather knowledge from individual things by way of the senses" (1). These non-transcendental orders, therefore, will be based on the experimental data in and through which we first become acquainted with existing objects.

(4) We must note, however, that the "finding" or "putting" of order in the objects which we experience always involves the "conceptualisation" of the sensible data, or, to put this in a way more fitting to Ewing's opponents, involves the "formalisation" of the words which refer to sense-data. Now we do not suggest that "conceptualisation" means to the Thomist the same as does "formalisation" to the logical positivist. But we wish to hold these two philosophical theories as close

/close together as possible in order to show what it is that is required at the logical level if we are to employ orders based on sensible data in the work of identifying and distinguishing the objects of our experience. In this connection the significance of the theory that "being is the first intelligible" and that everything that the mind conceives it conceives as "of being" is, briefly, as follows:- Suppose that we formulate two judgments, (a) This exists, and (b) This is red. The purpose of the second judgment is to act as a complement to the first in that it, (b), belongs amongst those judgments which we employ in order to understand more closely in what way the object referred to by "This" may be said to exist. Now, it is clear that the concept of red is distinct from the concept of being (although it must be said to imply it since "being is the first intelligible"), and hence we have, in these two judgments, two distinct predicates attributed to one and the same subject. It is clear therefore that what these concepts refer to cannot be viewed as characterising the object in exactly the same way. Nevertheless, in each case, if the judgment is true, we must describe the relation between the subject and predicate as one of identity. There must therefore be a certain difference in the ground of this identity. In each case the pre-

/predicate is attributed to the subject, and to the same subject, and there must be identity between the subject and predicate, but it is clear that this identity cannot concern the subject in exactly the same way in both cases, and that we must therefore be able to view the subject from more than one standpoint. Now, the distinctive mark of the identity between the predicate, being, and its subject is, as we have already noted, that it is an identity with the subject in the latter's concrete entirety. The subject, "This" is, or has being, by all that it is, and in all that it is. We can say that when we view an object from the standpoint of being we view it from an absolute standpoint. In all other cases, however, when we employ concepts which are distinct from the concept of being, in order to increase our knowledge of a given object, the identity between the predicate and the subject concerns the latter only as viewed from a relative standpoint, e.g., The subject "This" which is, is, from the standpoint of colour, red. This does not mean that only part of the given object is red, but that it is red as considered under a certain aspect.

It will be seen from this short account that the fundamental difference between the standpoint of being,

/being, and the standpoint of these other concepts which are distinct from being is that, while we must resort to these other standpoints in order to make up for the imperfections of our original knowledge of an object ("This exists"), we can never rejoin the given object in its concrete entirety through these concepts. The knowledge we gain through the latter is and must remain abstract, for, while it concerns the given object (which is realised and preserved as "one and the same subject" in the judgment of existence - hence the fundamental importance of this judgment) it concerns this object viewed abstractly, from a certain point of view, or from a number of points of view, which can never add up to the absolute point of view. This can only be supplied through the predicate, being, which alone can present the concrete existent as a subject of predication.

We may say, therefore, that the possibility of viewing an object from within different orders presupposes, (1), the possibility of recognising the object as a member of an absolute unconditional order to which it belongs in its concrete existence, and (2), the possibility of viewing this object from different aspects, which can be recognised as such, and the identities involved in predication within these aspects kept dis-

/distinct from the all embracing identity involved in the absolute unconditional order. If we have no means of distinguishing between the identities within the relative conditional orders and the identity within which the absolute unconditional order then it seems that inevitably we shall erect these relative orders into absolute orders, and we shall no longer be able to explain how it is that concepts or terms belonging to these orders, each of which is now not simply absolute in its own light, but absolutely absolute, can be applied to one and the same subject. Indeed, each of these concepts or terms will necessarily be viewed as representing a value of being with which the given object is identified absolutely, and the unity of the given object (which is reflected in the notion of "one and the same subject") will be reduced to a mere togetherness or collection of absolute terms.

We have thought it worth while to compare, as far as that has been possible, what we have called the "logic of positive terms" with the Thomist view of the place and function of empirical concepts in our knowledge of the concrete existent, because it must not be forgotten that the formalistic interpretation of the logic of positive terms has been put forward in the name of a radical realism, which is to banish, once and for all, the threat

/threat of a "second world" of universal ideas. We suggest that the Thomist theory of predication, as we have here presented it throws light on the difficulties which this particular "remedy" involves, and, in particular, explains how it is that we so frequently suspect that the remedy is not effective, and that the modern empiricists present us with worlds which "seem to contain no real things but only subsistent combinations of universals." (1)

Conclusion.

(1) With Kant (and, indeed, with St. Thomas) Ewing holds that sense alone cannot give us knowledge, but that the co-operation of thought is required. For Ewing the activity of thought is most clearly manifest in the logical ordering of what is "given" in sensible experience, a process whereby thought can sometimes find its way from certain elements of the given to certain other elements. The critical question which Kant raises is the question of how far, if at all, we are justified in holding that these "intelligible connections" do, in fact, characterise the real world. Is this connecting of the sensible data something which has its source in the thinking subject, or is it something which thought discovers in the real? Ewing argues for the second alternative, professing what we have called a "realism of the a priori". However, the form of his argument may justly be called non-critical or dogmatic, and it fails to explain what is meant by the necessary co-operation of thought and sense in the cognitive act, for, instead of treating thought and sense as components in one unitary act, they are erected to the status of independent sources of knowledge, each dealing with "objects" with which it alone can deal. It is true that Ewing views

/views these two types of object as belonging to the same real order, or as being "found together" in the real, but it is difficult to understand how, within his non-critical approach, a meaning can be given to the phrase "in the real": since both thought and sense are occupied solely with their own objects, neither seems fitted to recognise something which must be said to encompass them both in intelligibility, namely, the real in which, or as aspects of which, both objedts are to be viewed. There is, therefore, a tendency towards the division of the "objects" of knowledge into two worlds each regarded as possessing an absolute "reality-value" and beyond which it is impossible to recognise a common all-embracing "reality-value". In Thomist terminology we may say that, for Ewing, there is no "first intelligible" from within which all "reality-value" must be viewed as determined.

(2) We consider that this threat of "two worlds" has been borne out by our examination of certain arguments which Ewing employs to establish the view that "there is sometimes a logical connection between different characteristics or relations given or capable of being given in experience". For Ewing, thought is necessary to enable us to know the real as it really is, since the real is characterised by various systems in which what is given,

/given, or is capable of being given in experience is connected by a priori (or non-natural or non-empirical) relations, which thought alone can discover. By far the most important of these relations are certain logical relations, for example, entailment, logical incompatibility, and the specifically ethical (and not merely logical) relation of fittingness. In this present chapter we have confined ourselves to examining arguments in which Ewing attempts to show that what is given in sensible experience sometimes has non-sensible, or non-natural or non-empirical characteristics of a kind which is most suitably described as "logical", although, of course, the whole import of these arguments is to prove that these logical relations are not simply "logical", but also - and in the first place - real. We considered two such arguments: the first is, in fact, a description of what is involved in the process of knowing the truth of a proposition of Euclidean geometry: the second is presented in a different context, namely that of the correct analysis of "synthetic a priori propositions", and constitutes a criticism of the Linguistic theory of necessary truths.

(3) Two points of importance arise out of our consideration of the first argument: - (a) The "necessary connection" which Ewing claims to "see" as holding between

/between certain elements in a given experimental whole is the relation of entailment. This relation, however, holds not between the empirical data as these are given in sensible experience but between "isolates", and the "if....then" form of the proposition can be explained as that form in which such isolates can be held together by the mind in an intelligible unity. Such a relation is, of itself, essentially a logical relation, and as such it is not wrong but senseless to talk of it as existing in the real world. (b) We can describe a universal proposition as expressing the concrete consequences of an abstract truth. The interesting thing, however, is that, if ww can claim to know the truth of the strictly universal proposition, "In all triangles the sum of the angles is equal to two right-angles", this is because, in viewing any concrete sensibly given shape as a triangle, we have already imposed on it, or lifted it to, a level of intelligibility within which the rules of Euclidean geometry must work. In this connection we must note that, in describing an abstract truth as a truth concerning "isolates" we have not committed ourselves to holding that the terms of this truth (the "isolates") must be viewed as empirical concepts which have been formed by abstraction from the sensible qualities of a given partic-

/particular object. The point is that an abstract truth concerns certain characteristics in isolation from their manifestation (or "instantiation") in a concrete existent, or "sensibly given" whole. But exactly how we are to view this "instantiation" remains an open question, and, in particular, the possibility remains that the concrete existent, viewed through its sensible characteristics, does no more than provide psychological aid for the formation of ideas whose intelligible perfection owes nothing to the concrete existent. Ewing's description of the process involved in knowing the truth of this proposition concerning Euclidean triangles does nothing towards eliminating this possibility, and, indeed, supports the view that his "realism of the a priori" carries him towards a Platonic conception of a world of intelligible ideas within which (and not within the world of the "sensibly given") thought perceives or "intuits" logical relations. This same tendency can be shown in his arguments against the Linguistic theory of necessary truths, where he talks of "objective characteristics" and their logical incompatibility.

(4) It is true that Ewing makes much of the point that, employing an abstract truth, thought is able, given a second, empirical, premiss, to infer a "new truth" which

/which goes beyond what is given, here and now, in experience. But the sole function of this "empirical premiss" is to provide us with a given instance of one of the terms of the abstract truth, and we have just drawn attention to the obscurity which the term "instance" exhibits. It may be the case that the "given" in its concrete reality or being is, in fact, never reached in this argument. And nothing that Ewing has said is sufficient to prove the contrary. We suggest that if we do not make provision at the base of our epistemology for a judgment in which the predicate at once transcends and contains all abstract and partial views of the real we shall never be able to rejoin the concrete existent in its absolute value of being, and we shall have deprived ourselves of the only point of view from within which it would be possible to ground the critical value of all our abstract concepts. (We do not mean to suggest that this is automatically achieved by recognising the concept of being over and above all abstract concepts, but only that such a recognition grounds this possibility. Abstract concepts are of different types and the same treatment cannot be applied to them all.) Moreover, to return to Ewing's position, we can see how it is that, for him, it must indeed be the case that all a priori propositions are hypothetical

/hypothetical in character, i.e., conditional. Thus, on condition that a sensibly given object (A) is X, it is X. But this has not told us the conditions under which we can claim to know that A is X, or, to put it another way, this has not told us what, in fact, is involved in this "knowing that A is X". (This, again, for Ewing would be a silly question to ask, for "empirical knowledge" requires no more explanation than does "a priori knowledge". Here we meet again Ewing's non-critical approach.) Now, the trouble is that within, for example, the sphere of mathematics there seems to be a very real sense in which we may be said to <u>construct</u> these conditions for ourselves. We suggest that there is only one point at which we can be sure without <u>previous</u> critical reflection that in the judgment "A is X" the activity of thought is, as it were fully contained and adequately measured by its object, and that is the judgment in which "X" stands for the transcendental value of being (See Ch. I, Section 3.). It is also only by this judgment that we are provided with a subject for further predications by which our knowledge of A <u>as real</u> may be advanced.

(5) We may point out here that it is significant that, in the case of the <u>a priori</u> in the field of ethics, Ewing admits a certain difficulty in moving from an abstract

/abstract truth (a synthetic a priori proposition concerning "objective characteristics" and their "fittingness") to its concrete consequences (1): to put it paradoxically, Ewing is bound to admit that these latter do not always follow. For example, because it is true that lying as such is wrong, it does not follow that all particular lies are wrong. This suggests that we ought not to conceive the form or pattern of intelligibility in Ethics as being the same as that of "mathematical intelligibility", and it so far supports the contention mentioned in the Conclusion of Chapter I, that "intelligibility" is itself an analogical notion. It may indeed be that notions connected with the idea of "intrinsic goodness" bear upon objects in their concrete existence, and consequently require to be traced back to the metaphysical order of being, and viewed from the point of view of metaphysical intelligibility (2).

(6) We are now in a position to appreciate the strength of the Linguistic theory of a priori propositions in the face of Ewing's non-critical "realism of the a priori", for we must realise that it is in the name of a radical realism that an explanation of the a priori constructions of thought is sought, which will entirely exclude the

/the possibility of a "two world" threat. It is difficult to state briefly, without misleading over-simplification, how this is achieved, but one important mark of the method involved is the refusal to treat the terms of *a priori* propositions as concepts with a content which we "view from within" (cf. *intus legere*). For example, the truths concerning Euclidean triangles are not grounded in an intellectual vision of the "essence" of triangularity considered as an intelligible idea, but in the initial and arbitrary axioms and definitions whereby the *order* of Euclidean geometry is defined. Clearly such an interpretation of the necessary truths of mathematics completely destroys the threat of a "second world", and it also derives considerable force from the success of a formalistic, "non-intentional" treatment of what is called "formal logic". It is true, of course, that, no more than on Ewing's theory, can such "necessary truths" be said, on this theory, to *reach down* to the concrete existent. But, then, this theory explicitly denies the reality reference of such truths, in this sense that necessary truths do not concern the *reality-value* of an object, but, precisely, its *formal-value*, as viewed from within an arbitrarily defined system. Such "knowledge" therefore cannot give us any information about what any

/any given object "really is", and to think that it can is to view such "knowledge" from non-critical or dogmatic standpoint. It is here we can see the ineffectiveness of Ewing's treatment of his opponents' arguments, for, in fact, he is refusing to take up the critical standpoint.

(7) We have ourselves suggested a line of argument which we think Ewing might have developed against the Linguistic theory, though we are fully aware that an adequate presentation of such an argument would require a wider and far more detailed examination of "Logical Positivism" than we are in a position to offer here. But our argument against the Logical Positivists is, a fortiori, an argument against Ewing, for what, in fact, we have been suggesting is that the former do not adopt a sufficiently critical standpoint. And, against Ewing, what we wish to insist on is that "empirical knowledge" requires a justification just as much as "a priori knowledge". If, in empirical knowledge, we employ terms which refer to sense-data, e.g., the terms, red smooth, etc., then what we want to know is, under what conditions can such sense-data be viewed as "revealing the real"; for this is, indeed, their function in empirical judgments, which, according to both Ewing and his opponents, do give us information about the real. We cannot simply

/simply say that the terms refer to data, and that so long as we limit ourselves to using them we cannot be said to have distorted or changed or moved away from the real as it really is, for the point is that, when these terms are employed in advancing our knowledge of the real, the sense-data to which they refer are viewed, not as revealing themselves but as revealing a reality of which they are the real qualities or characteristics. It is this fact which requires to be explained, and it seems to us important to note that the "logic of positive terms" is, in fact, an attempt to deal with the question at the correct level, namely the logical level. For the question does not, in itself, concern the structure of real things (and therefore we should be misled if we thought that the introduction of some metaphysical category, like Substance - accident, would help us at this point), but it concerns the formal conditions which render possible the use of positive terms, which refer to sense-data, in propositions in which these terms must be viewed as signifying a reality-value of a given object. Our contention is that a "logic of positive terms" is not sufficient to provide these formal conditions, but that it requires to be crowned by what we may call the "logic of the transcendental notion of

/of being". In our opinion, it is because they do not recognise this, that those who profess a radical empiricism come very close to a position which seems in direct opposition to the fundamental aspiration of empiricism, which is the desire to hold fast to the concretely real, and to avoid the "dream world" of abstract universals.

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(1) D. of G. p.37.

Page 78.

(1) Ch.II, p.69.

(2) "Expressive theories of ethical statements.... maintain that ethical statements do not make assertions but express something in the mind of the speaker". (W.H.F. Barnes, "Ethics without Propositions", Aristotelian Society Supplementary Proceedings, Vol.XXII, p.6).

Page 79.

(1) See A.J. Ayer, L.T. & L., p.105.

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(1) A.C. Ewing, "The Linguistic Theory of A Priori Propositions", Aristotelian Society Proceedings 1939-1940, p.210. (Henceforward referred to as L.T.A.P.P.).

(2) A.C. Ewing, Idealism, London 1934, pp.73-76.

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(1) Loc. cit.

(2) Idealism, p.73.

(3) See, for example, Idealism, p.75, L.T.A.P.P., p.219, and D. of G. p.53.

Page 83.

(1) Idealism, p.74.

(2) Idealism, p.73, footnote (1).

(3) See, for example, D. of G. p.39.

Page 84.

(1) See Ayer, L.T. & L. p.17.

Page 85.

(1) Idealism, p.74.

Page 88.

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Page 92.

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(1) Idealism, p.75.

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(1) See D.J.B. Hawkins, Causality and Implication, Sheed and Ward, London 1947, pp.74-76.

(2) D. of G. pp. 52, 53.

(3) See Idealism, p.189.

(4) Idealism, p.75; L.T.A.P.P. p.243.

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(1) L.T.A.P.P. p.243.

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(1) Idealism, p.189.

Page 102.

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(2) See Hawkins, Causality and Implication, Ch.IV, Sect.7, especially p.85.

Page 104.

(1) L.T.A.P.P. p.219.

(2) L.T.A.P.P. p.210.

(3) L.T. & L. pp.16-18.

Page 105.

(1) L.T.A.P.P. p.218.

REFS. Chapter III (Contd.)

Page 106.

(1) L.T.A.P.P. p.219.

(2) L.T.A.P.P. p.235.

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(1) L.T.A.P.P. p.235.

(2) L.T.A.P.P. p.236.

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(1) L.T.A.P.P. pp.235, 236.

Page 113.

(1) See p.106.

Page 114.

(1) L.T.A.P.P. p.214.

Page 118.

(1) See pp.107, 108.

Page 127.

(1) Esse est illud quod est magis intimum cuilibet et profundius inest.....S.Th.I. Q.8, a.1.

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(1) S.Th.I. Q.76, a.5.

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(1) D.J.B. Hawkins, The Criticism of Experience, Sheed and Ward, London, 1945, pp.80, 81.

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(1) See D. of G. pp.194-196.

(2) See Chapter I, Conclusion (5).

CHAPTER IV. THE CONSEQUENCES OF EWING'S EPISTEMOLOGICAL THEORY IN THE SPHERE OF ETHICAL ANALYSIS.

Introduction.

We noted in Chapter II that Ewing differed from Moore in arguing that "good" is definable. This difference is not, however, of direct interest to us here for Ewing is in fundamental agreement with Moore on the necessity of recognising at least one fundamental and indefinable "ethical" term. (Before proceeding any further we think it necessary to draw attention to the significance which is to be attached to the term "ethical" in what follows. Both Ewing and Moore agree that ethical goodness is not the sole type of "intrinsic goodness" and their non-naturalism, while it is often described with the use of the term "ethical" is meant to extend to all intrinsic goodness, and consequently to be based on evidence which is not exclusively that of ethical phenomena. Wherever possible we shall therefore substitute for the term "ethical" either the term "value" or the term "goodness", taking these as synonymous for "intrinsic goodness".)

A problem, however, presents itself at the outset of this examination of Ewing's theory of non-naturalism, which suggests that there exists a difference between

/between Ewing and Moore of a very fundamental nature, and which, we suggest, Ewing himself does not recognise. The problem is to determine what exactly is meant when it is claimed that the autonomy of ethics as a science can only be safeguarded if a unique "object" is assigned to it. Does this statement have the same significance for Ewing as it has for Moore? A passage in THE DEFINITION OF GOOD (1) is relevant. Ewing admits that it is hard to understand how, if goodness is simple and quite intelligible apart from its relations, there can be synthetic a priori judgments connecting it with other properties, and he writes, "That there should be any synthetic a priori propositions connecting a simple property with other properties does seem incompatible, not indeed with its irreducibility by analysis, but with the notion that its full internal nature could be grasped apart from its relations to the other properties which are entailed by it." And he further says, "Granted that a concept is simple and unanalysable, the correct point of view may be to look on it not as for that reason intelligible in itself, but rather as being too much of an abstraction to stand by itself." (2) This qualification by Ewing seems to us of the utmost importance. For, if we feel dissatisfaction at the nature of Moore's final court of appeal (i.e. inspection of the nature of the object of thought designated by the term "good") we must never-

/nevertheless admit that it is the logical outcome of his method of analysis. For this method, practised within the theory of neo-realism, presupposes that the progressive analysis of the complex "objects of thought" is at the same time a revealing of the ultimate irreducible elements which "make up" reality. To reach a simple and unanalysable "object of thought" is to reach a unique and irreducible element of the real. On such a theory it is literally nonsense to talk of a concept (if by this is meant what is meant by "object of thought") which is simple and unanalysable and yet is "too much of an abstraction to stand by itself." For Moore, to reach the simple and unanalysable is to reach that which is the source of all intelligibility. Once we realise this we see that in separating "intelligibility" and "simple and unanalysable" Ewing is cutting at the very roots of the system of thought within which the problem of naturalism-non-naturalism was originally formulated by Moore.

We can see that in terms of Moore's philosophy the autonomy of ethics can only be guaranteed if the <u>real</u> contains a unique and irreducible element corresponding to the term "good". But if a distinction is made between the irreducibility of a concept and its intelligibility it no longer follows that because a concept is

/is irreducible to other concepts it necessarily reflects a simple and irreducible element of reality. On the contrary, if a concept requires other concepts in order to be rendered intelligible this means that the reality which it presents to the mind is not simple but complex, and this complexity is presupposed by the intelligibility of the given unanalysable concept. This complex therefore must be present in some way to the mind, and it must present a certain unity of intelligibility which is prior to the distinctions reflected in the mutual irreducibility of separate concepts. To recognise at one and the same time that value concepts cannot be reduced to non-value concepts, and yet that the former can only be made intelligible with the help of the latter is to recognise that the source of intelligibility transcends both and must be found in a wider unity which grounds the distinction at the level of concepts and at the same time accounts for its transcendence at the level of the real. In spite however of this remark, Ewing does in fact argue that the unique indefinable concept "fittingness" represents an irreducible element of reality, and he does attempt to unite this concept with a natural concept in the complex concept of goodness, without appealing to any further principle of unity and intelligibility. We shall examine the success of this attempt in Chapter V. In this present chapter we

/we shall examine the nature of the considerations Ewing puts forward for the presence of non-natural concepts (or one such concept) in value judgments. In the course of this examination it will become evident that the fundamental point at issue between Ewing and the "naturalists" concevns the ultimate source of intelligibility. Ewing wishes to "cure" empiricism by an injection of rationalism, but this is impossible. Ewing's introduction of epistemological considerations into the naturalist-non-naturalist debate reveals to us that this debate is, in fact, closely connected with the empiricism-rationalism opposition and in the final section we shall consider the repercussions of this for a clearer understanding of the nature of this debate.

Section 1. Ewing's Objections to Naturalistic Definitions of Good.

In Ewing's opinion the least implausible forms of naturalistic definition are those employing psychological terms such as "approval" or "desire" and it is to such theories that he devotes the longest criticism. (1) We shall not deal with his arguments in detail since, on his own view, "the same insight shows the falsity of all". (2) We can, he considers, "perceive directly that good is not analysable in psychological terms." (3) The two most

/most important elements in the reflection leading to the realisation that "ethical concepts are generically different from, and therefore incapable of reduction to, the concepts of psychology or any other empirical science" (1) are; 1. the fact that from all naturalistic definitions the notion of obligation is missing (2), while this notion is, according to Ewing involved in "at least some meanings of good, for example, morally good" (3) and, 2. the fact that, "when we see that something is intrinsically good or some act morally obligatory we also see that it must be so - its factual properties being, what they are." (4) It would, however, be impossible, according to Ewing to find such a necessary relation between the factual properties of an experience or action and any purely psychological state or attitude, for our approvals and disapprovals, and aversions may change without any change in the factual properties of the experience or action under consideration; they depend not on the character of the latter, but on our own psychological constitution and this is subject to many contingent factors. (5)

Ewing's views on the correct analysis of the notion of obligation and its place within the complex notion of good will be considered in Chapter V. We shall here

/here examine the implications of the second point we have noted, namely, the characteristic of necessity which marks certain value judgments. It is irrelevant to our purpose that this consideration taken by itself is directly effective only against psychological forms of naturalism, for our intention is not to examine the validity of Ewing's particular arguments against naturalism, but to attempt to discover the basic assumptions which govern his method of treatment of the naturalist-non-naturalist controversy.

For our purpose it is important to consider the significance of the final phrase of the quotation made above on the characteristic of necessity in value judgments. Recalling our examination in the previous chapter we may say that for Ewing the necessary and the a priori are directly characteristic of abstract propositions. "We do not know affirmative categorical a priori propositions, though granted empirical premisses we can use a priori hypothetical propositions to draw categorical affirmative conclusions." (1) Thus, if the experience of a particular act reveals to us the fact that it is necessarily good, this is always in virtue of certain factual properties which it instantiates, and the function of the particular experience is to provide the "empirical data" enabling us to draw a categorical

/categorical conclusion. Hence epistemological priority belongs to the abstract proposition in which goodness is attributed to certain "factual properties" as such and in abstraction from their embodiment in particular individual existents.

Once, however, this is realised we appreciate more fully the grounds on which Ewing insists on the presence of synthetic a priori propositions in ethics, and also the necessity of characterising goodness as non-natural. For if the basic truths of value - those on whose intelligibility depends the intelligibility of all particular judgments of value - concern the goodness of natural qualities considered in isolation from their concrete embodiment in existent realities it is evident that this goodness cannot be contained within the concepts of these qualities. For to say that these qualities are considered in isolation "from their concrete embodiment" is to say that they are considered purely in themselves. To claim consequently that the concept of these qualities contains the concept of goodness which we attribute to them would be either to break the Law of Identity or to fall into tautology. Such an argument is not, however, sufficient to establish the existence in the real order of a unique and irreducible "entity" corresponding to the concept good, or to part of it. To suppose that it is is to assume that

/that the existent realities from which the natural qualities in question have been isolated are in fact, no more than collections of those natural qualities. If, however, it is recognised that the "natural qualities" which the mind represents to itself in "the concepts of natural science" (1) constitute merely a partial aspect of any concrete existent or being then the fact that, when viewed under this aspect, the goodness of a being is not "contained within" the concept of these properties does not prove that this goodness cannot be accounted for by the metaphysical principles whereby the particular reality is constituted in the order of being.

This line of argument, consequently, is relevant only when it is employed in dealing with a positivistic theory of the nature of individual beings or existents. It is clear that such a theory leaves no place within its world for the presence of value or goodness. If then we are convinced of the reality of value or goodness we must add another "world" to the "world of facts", and since, as philosophers, we seek intelligibility we must at some point "recognise" that these two worlds are "intelligibly connected." Hence the need for synthetic <u>a priori</u> propositions and the corresponding "mental intuition". But the question remains: is this

/this recognition really recognition and are these connections really "out there" to be recognised (or intuited), or are we here dealing with "a rationalist superstition according to which a quasi-logical necessity binds moral predicates to others?" (1)

Bearing in mind that it is by this act of intuition that the intelligibility of the "union" of factual properties and value properties is realised and that ultimate intelligibility lies in the linkage of factual properties to value properties by the synthetic a priori propositions, we shall confine our attention to two points arising out of Ewing's own treatment of the place and function of these propositions in ethics:-

1. There is, as P.F. Strawson has pointed out (2), an incompatibility in the intuitionists' account of the necessary and universal propositions upon whose intelligibility is supposed to depend the intelligibility of individual instances or cases of value predication. For if it is the case that the "reason why" a particular act or state is good, is that it possesses certain empirically ascertainable features from which the characteristic of value necessarily follows, then it should be the case that whenever these features are present in a situation that situation possesses the same value characteristic. But, in fact, Ewing, and other intuitionists (3), admit

/admit that the general propositions of ethics cannot be framed in "absolutist" terms. We cannot, for example, say that the promotion of pleasure is in all circumstances good, or that it is always a duty to keep a promise; and yet, according to Ewing, when we consider them in isolation from the particular circumstances of their realisation, we see that the characteristic of goodness follows from these empirical features which characterise a state as pleasurable or from those features which characterise an act as being one of promise-keeping. Now, when we bear in mind that it is in this "seeing" or intuiting that the source of the intelligibility of our experience of value or goodness is supposed to lie we realise that the recourse to synthetic a priori propositions does not, in fact, render the particular experience intelligible. We still require a principle or principles to enable us to assess the relative weight to be assigned to the rival claims of different aspects of one and the same event or act, for, according to Ewing, "the primary ethical intuition.....is not that any action as a whole is fitting or unfitting, but that it is fitting or unfitting in certain respects." (1) Hence these a priori synthetic propositions cannot provide the ultimate ground of intelligibility, for, in a particular given case, the relevant a priori proposition is only made to serve its function by being conditioned or qualified by the addition of some phrase to the

/the effect that the facts of the case under consideration are such that while the a priori proposition concerns directly only a certain aspect of the whole situation there is present in the latter no other aspect which would counterbalance its applicability (1). The necessity of such conditioning or amending of the a priori by appeal to the particular experience in its entirety is clearly inconsistent with the claim that the latter is rendered intelligible solely by the former: whatever part these a priori synthetic propositions play in rendering a value situation intelligible, it is clear that they cannot themselves provide the final ground which establishes a value situation purely and simply as a value situation.

2. The second difficulty we find in Ewing's account bears directly on this last point, and consideration of it will carry us into the heart of the dispute between him and those whom he calls "naturalists." According to Ewing, the necessity of recognising an intelligible connection between factual properties and value characteristics is forced on us by the characteristics of our experience of what we may call "value situations", or, at least, of those in which we recognise the presence of intrinsic goodness or moral obligation. He writes, (2) "goodness and badness, obligatoriness and wrongness are not properties that could possibly be removed from an

/an experience or action without the experience or action being in other ways different and this impossibility is not merely the effect of causal laws." Now, according to Ewing, this fact about value situations implies that the value characteristics in question follow necessarily from the factual properties by which the action or experience is qualified: thus the only interpretation he gives of the phrase "without the experience or action being in "other ways different" is without the experience or action possessing <u>different empirically</u> ascertainable characteristics." He never raises the question whether it is possible to give a unified description of what is in fact <u>one</u> experience or situation, in terms of concepts which have no common principle <u>within which</u> they are formed. (1) The "gap" between the concepts is supposed to be bridged by the "intelligible connections", but, on his own words, "relations between terms can only occur within a wider unity connecting the terms (2) and, again, "so far from relations being independent of their terms the qualities of their terms are most relevant to the occurrence of the relations." (3) A relation is not made intelligible by being "posed" as intelligible and if the empirical concepts whereby the mind represents to itself the factual characteristics of its experience have nothing in common with the value concepts in which

/which it represents the value characteristics of that same experience it is hard to see what could be meant by saying that they are related by an intelligible connection which is viewed directly in the real by an act of intuition.

It is unfortunate that Ewing does not make more clear what he means by "natural concepts." He merely says, (1) "I think we may understand a naturalist view of ethics as one which.....analyses ethical concepts solely in terms of the concepts of a natural science." And from his general treatment of the question of the relationship between factual and value characteristics we may conclude that he considers that all concepts of what he calls "factual characteristics" possess the same formal characteristics as those of the concepts of the natural sciences. When this is realised, however, we see at once the absurdity of trying to "find" the characteristic of value or goodness within the world of factual characteristics, for this world is equated with the world which can be represented solely within the concepts of the natural sciences. But the formal characteristic of this "world" is precisely that it contains that and that only which can be submitted to observation and measurement in space/time; it is concerned only with that aspect of human experience which is controllable and

/and verifiable by objective, positive, methods. Clearly the notion of value cannot arise within a universe experienced in this positivistic mode. It is not that value is opposed to the world of the scientist, but that the scientist as such is not and cannot be concerned with the affirmation of value or disvalue. This point may be illustrated by considering the example Ewing offers (1) in illustration of the necessity which is supposed to characterise certain value judgments: "Hitler could not have done the actions which had the factual properties his actions towards the Jews possessed and yet have prevented the actions having the additional properties of badness and wrongness." Ewing does not list these "factual properties" but at first sight we have no difficulty in suggesting what type of fact he has in mind, as, for instance, the infliction of bodily pain, and, in more detail, various forms of torture with which reliable testimony has made us familiar in these recent years. But when we examine more closely what it is exactly that we are here describing we come across certain difficulties. Is the infliction of bodily pain as such wrong or bad? What, again, do we mean by "infliction?" Even more ambiguous is the term "torture" which already seems to include a valuational element. Are these terms concepts of natural science? If we were to confine ourselves to

/to that aspect of the situation which could be expressed in terms of a natural science we should have to limit ourselves to the occurrence of bodily pain in one human organism following on (or caused by) certain movements of another human organism. And when we ask what, in scientific terms, is meant or signified by the word, "pain" the answer would ultimately be in terms of observable "behaviour". In short, in the measure in which we succeed in giving an account of the situation within the concepts of a natural science, we are forced to divest this situation of those very elements within which the notion of value can arise. We do not deny that a value situation has physical aspects nor that these are relevant to the assessment of the value of the situation: human action is and must be embodied in the material universe. But this incarnation is not a simple juxtaposition of "empirically verifiable facts" and intuitively grasped value characteristics; for, in a value situation the "factual properties" have originally a different significance from that represented in the concepts of a natural science; they are from the outset integrated into a system other than that of the scientific universe, they are the object of quite a different point of view.

These brief comments are not intended as a solution to the problem of the ultimate source of the intellig-

/intelligibility of value situations; they are merely intended as an indication that the elements necessary for such a solution are far more complicated than Ewing suggests by his use of the term "natural concepts", and by his appeal to "intelligible connections." The problem must be tackled further back, for, if the world of science as representable in scientific concepts is closed to the world of value and vice versa, then unless one of these "worlds" is denied the real value which it might be held to possess in virtue of its presenting at least a partial aspect of reality, we must seek a source of unity more ultimate than either of these "worlds" and concurrently with this a principle of intelligibility more comprehensive than those within which our concepts of science and our concepts of value are respectively engendered.

Section 2. Ewing and the Empiricists.

We can now understand why it is that we find Ewing's method of dealing with the naturalist so inefficacious. He writes (1) "the philosophers who give naturalist definitions of ethical terms do not, despite their predilection for empiricism, commend their conclusions as the direct result of a plain empirical investigation of our moral experience, but put these forward on the assumpt-

/assumption that if they can find a hypothesis which will rid them of any concept different from those of the natural sciences they ought to accept it whether or not it seems introspectively plausible." There is in this criticism a certain ambiguity in the phrase "plain empirical investigation." It is true that if the philosophers under discussion were to describe the whole of their experience in any situation in which they were involved they would be involved in listing sentiments and attitudes which would certainly be "valuational." But the empiricist, as, indeed, every philosopher, is concerned to do more than simply describe his experience: he wishes to discover the ultimate principle of intelligibility in the light of which he can determine under what conditions and in what measure he can attain cognition of the real.

The empiricist principle which reduces the field of knowledge to that of "fact" positivistically interpreted may be wrong, but it is of no avail to ask the empiricist to remain wedded to his principle and yet, at the same time, to admit what by its very nature cannot be introduced into his system of concepts. Ewing is quite clearly determined to concede as much as possible to the naturalist and he claims for his own theory "the advantage of providing the minimum non-naturalist theory of ethics, by which I mean the non-

/non-naturalist theory which a converted naturalist could accept with the least divergence from his previous views." (1) This statement shows clearly that Ewing considers the "conversion" in question to be one of "degree" rather than "kind"; that all that is necessary is that the naturalist should extend his principle a little further. But in refusing to do this the naturalist is merely being faithful to his principle. On the other hand, those who sympathise with Ewing's concern to save value from dissolution within positivism will be equally inimical to the method he proposes, recognising with the naturalist that it cannot be used for the task Ewing imposes on it.

This enables us to support the contention we put forward in Chapter III that a form of non-naturalist objectivism which does not meet the demands of a critical epistemology serves to strengthen the force of theories of the Expressive type. For our examination has led us to the point where we appreciate the impossibility of "inserting" value into the world represented in scientific or naturalist concepts. We appreciate, too, that Ewing's attempt to "enlarge" this world by the "imposition" of intelligible connections between factual characteristics and value

/value characteristics lacks justification; he does not prove that these intelligible connections correspond to anything in the real, and, on the side of the cognitive subject, they do not appear to increase intelligibility.

If, then, we are persuaded that it is impossible to give an adequate translation of statements of value in terms of scientific or naturalist concepts we are faced with two possibilities: we must either say that a statement of value as such does not correspond to anything <u>in the real</u>, or we must admit that the empiricist conception of reality and of the intelligible principle which governs the cognitive act, is too narrow, and, in fact, represents only an impoverished aspect of the total intelligible situation. Now, although it may be said that in one sense this is what Ewing does when he introduces value characteristics and the corresponding mental act of intuition, it remains true that for him the impoverishment is made good by the simple addition of other elements to the already constituted world of natural science, and this we have shown to be critically unjustified.

In the concluding remarks of Chapter I we offered certain reflections, drawn from Thomist principles, on the notion of the "intelligibility of being": these

/these reflections enable us to give an interpretation of this failure in the following terms:-

1. Being is the "first intelligible", and all the mind's concepts are contained within the notion of Being.

2. The cognitive act consists in the conformity of the mind to Being.

3. Such conformity is self-conscious, which implies that the mind is able to assess the critical or real import value of the concepts through which it expresses to itself in its judgment the conformity of these concepts to being.

4. Such an assessment can only be made in the light of the notion of being, since the latter is "the first intelligible."

5. It follows from this that what the mind is able to ground critically will depend on the richness or depth of its notion of being.

6. Consequently, if unconditioned or absolute critical value is placed on a concept or on a group of concepts in virtue of certain specific characteristics which they exhibit it will necessarily follow that these characteristics become the condition of critical value as such, with the result that the notion of being within which the

/the cognitive activity works will become narrowed to the concept of a specific type of being.

7. It will then become impossible by reason of the very nature of the cognitive act to ground in being (i.e. to critically justify) any element of the cognitive situation which does not exhibit the characteristics of the specific type of being to which the notion of being has been limited. Such elements will have to be discarded from the situation as intelligible ("Being is the first intelligible") and a quite different description of them and of the situation which they characterise will have to be given.

Section 3. The "Third Theory."

This interpretation throws light on the relation between "classical" naturalism and certain more recent forms of non-intuitional ethics, and thereby helps to support the contention we made in the Introduction to Chapter III that there is a connection between naturalism and theories of the Expressive type. It is clear that if absolute critical value is attributed to a specific type of concept then the sphere of statements purporting to inform us about the nature of the real is, and must be, limited to those utterances which are composed solely of terms indicating concepts of this type. The various forms of "classical" naturalism may then be described as so many efforts

/efforts to reduce or translate ethical assertions into statements belonging to one or other of the positive sciences, whether psychology, sociology or biology. Those thinkers however, who accept the empiricist principle of knowledge have become increasingly aware of the objections to be brought against the attempts to reduce ethical sentences to scientific statements. (1) In the effort to save their radical empiricism they are seeking a "third theory" (2), which will preserve them from both the "metaphysics of ultimacy" ("of intuited unanalysable ethical characteristics") and the "tough metaphysics of translation." (3)

It is not easy to see one's way clearly through the variants of this "third theory" nor to understand fully the intricacies of their position as this is described by certain thinkers. However, A.J. Ayer, in his work cited above, does put clearly certain negative aspects of his theory and these are important in enabling us to illustrate to some degree the reflections we have made above, and to justify our contention of the close connection between naturalism and theories of the "expressive" type. Ayer finds himself in the position of being unable to accept as possible the reduction of ethical terms to non-ethical terms. (4) At the same time, consistently with his "radical empiricism" (5) he cannot admit an "intellectual intuition" of ethical properties

/properties or characteristics. What account, then, can be given of ethical terms? His answer is that these terms are not in fact concepts at all: "we say that the reason why they are unanalysable is that they are mere pseudo-concepts." (1) He clarifies this contention by saying, "The presence of an ethical symbol in a proposition adds nothing to its factual content"; and, again, he says that ethical judgments are sentences which have "no objective validity whatsoever..... sentences which simply express moral judgments do not say anything. They are pure expressions of feeling and as such do not come under the category of truth and falsehood." (2) Reflecting on Ayer's position it seems to us clear that if, on the one hand, we refuse the possibility of translating ethical terms into "natural terms", and, on the other hand, we accept the empiricist principle as the ultimate principle of knowledge (and therefore of intelligibility) then the course which Ayer takes is the sole one open to him in dealing with ethical terms. We must refuse to include them in the intentional order, that is to say, in the order of mental terms (or concepts) whereby the mind thinks the real or refers to the real. When we employ such terms in our language we are not, and we cannot be, referring to the real as conveying information about it, as questioning its nature, or as saying to ourselves that it is thus and not otherwise. We can be

/be doing none of these things for the simple reason that we have limited the intelligibility of being to that aspect of the real which can be contained within empirical or "natural" concepts. Thus, it seems to us that, on its negative side at least, Ayer's theory clearly justifies our contention that there is a close connection between the theories of classical naturalism and theories of the Expressive type, and it also proves an illustration of the value of the conception of the intelligibility of being in enabling us to understand the development of empiricism into its highly critical present-day form as illustrated by the work of a logical positivist such as Professor Ayer.

Ewing refuses to follow Ayer in his interpretation of ethical statements. He holds that the value terms in a proposition do correspond to something in the real; that value statements are genuine propositions, having objective validity. It follows therefore that his notion of being must be richer than that of the exponents of Expressive theories. It seems to us, however, that he does not sufficiently develop the epistemological consequences of this enlargement of the notion of being. For if the latter is to contain both natural and value concepts and these are formally distinct it is clear that absolute critical value cannot be attributed to either: to do so would necessarily involve,

/involve, in the last resort, either the reduction of one to the other, or, the alternative we have already suggested, viz., the dropping of one or other out of the "intelligible picture". Ewing refuses this latter alternative and yet he attempts to avoid the former. There is, however, an inherent instability in his epistemological position in which, as we noted in Chapter III, we find the juxtaposition of two quite different "principles" of knowledge (sensible or introspective experience and intuition) and two quite separate and equally "ultimate" spheres of reality. Now, the impossibility which he himself acknowledges, (1) of accepting this as the ultimate metaphysical position indicates directly not only the possibility but the necessity of going beyond this dichotomy on the side of the cognitive subject as well as on the side of the object known.

Section 4. Empiricism and Rationalism.

This raises the crucial questions whether this "going beyond" is to be realised through an elimination of one member of each pair or whether it is to be realised by transcending the dichotomy and reintegrating it in a higher unity both on the side of the cognitive subject and on the side of the reality known. Empiricism and rationalism may be said to represent the results of

/of eliminating one or other of the members of each pair. Ewing has pointed out (1) that in practice these terms indicate tendencies rather than exclusive positions. Nevertheless, if we consider them as epistemological principles they are, strictly speaking, exclusive of one another. It is for this reason that Ewing's attempt to supplement the inadequacies of empiricism by the simple addition of a priori elements lacks critical justification. For, while he refuses to accept the empiricist principle as the sole principle of knowledge, he nevertheless appears to leave it as sovereign or absolute within a certain sphere. This sphere is described variously as the sphere of "facts of existence" (2) of "factual properties" (3) and, also, in terms of the corresponding mental activity, as the field of "sensible experience", and of "empirical concepts." If, however, we admit that there is a sphere of reality within which the empiricist principle is ultimate what we are in fact asserting is that there is a sphere of reality whose final value as being is faithfully and adequately presented in the data of sensible experience. Knowledge in this sphere will then consist in the correct registering of what is given (or can be given) in sensible experience. The intelligible value of the corresponding concepts will then be reduced to the data, real and possible, to which they apply. Now,

/Now, if we ask for the grounds on which such a principle might be asserted we find that they may be of two kinds, which we shall call dogmatic and critical. In the first case we have a reasoning of the following type: we have knowledge of what is given us in sensible experience. Therefore what is given us in sensible experience is real. Whatever, therefore, can be verified by means of sense experience is by that fact and in that measure knowable. The dogmatism of this position is revealed once we realise that the empiricist principle is a principle of knowledge only if an equation is made between "what is given to us in sensible experience," and, "what is known by us through sensible data." Now, epistemological realism does not justify us in making this equation: it merely justifies us in saying that in sensible knowledge we are aware of a reality distinct from our act of knowledge; it does not enable us to conclude that this reality is exhaustively and faithfully presented to us in the data of sensible experience.

The second type of ground which we have called"critical" would take into account the above criticism and recognise that to sustain the empiricist principle of knowledge it is necessary to formulate it in terms of being as intelligible. Thus it would explicitly identify being as intelligible, and the data actual or possible, of sensible experience. It might be objected that such an identification is, taken in

/in itself, quite dogmatic. This is true; but, in fact, those who have held it have had reasons for holding it. It is, for example, the principle of knowledge which conforms most closely to a materialist metaphysics. But it may also be held in a non-constitutive form, that is to say, in a form which does not imply a metaphysic of the cognitive act and of the object known. There is still an identification of being as intelligible and the data of sensible experience, but all metaphysical import is resolutely banished from this identification. What we are left with is simply the "regulative" principle that intelligibility is measured by the data, actual or possible, of sensible experience. For the grounds for holding the principle in this form, and for its correct formulation, we should have to consider the work of a writer such as A.J. Ayer. But what must be noted is that whether the principle is held in "constitutive" or "regulative" form the implications of holding it are the same for Ewing. If the principle is critically formulated, then, in accepting it as valid for a certain sphere of reality Ewing must necessarily limit intelligibility to that sphere. On the other hand, if he accepts the principle in its dogmatic form there is, it is true, nothing to prevent him asserting another sphere of reality and another "principle" to correspond with it. How-

/However, such an assertion will be as dogmatic as his original acceptance of the empiricist principle, and Ewing thus puts himself in the false position of not being able to raise the critical question. For, if we admit "thought" and "sense" as separate principles of knowledge, we are immediately committed to the dogmatic attribution of an absolute value of being to each of their objects; we are then incapable of explaining either the unity of one knowledge or the unity of being which measures it. On the side of being we have two distinct and irreducible spheres; on the side of thought we have two distinct and irreducible types of concept, each mirroring completely and exhaustively the reality of which they are concepts. The logical order (i.e. the order of concepts) may be distinct from the real order, but it is, in fact, no more than a faithful replica of the real order.

It seems to us that this is the assumption which lies behind Ewing's whole treatment of the epistemological issues involved in the naturalist-non-naturalist controversy. When this is made clear the impossibility of solution of this debate, as the latter is envisaged by Ewing, becomes evident. This will enable us to situate the debate in its wider philosophical implications. We shall therefore devote the following, final, section to an examination of the place played by this assumption

/assumption in Ewing's arguments, with a view to placing the debate in its correct philosophical setting.

Section 5. Naturalism and Non-Naturalism.

The naturalist-non-naturalist debate is often described in terms of concepts, i.e., whether the concepts of value can be defined by means of "natural" or "scientific" or "empirical" (here treated as synonymous) concepts. We are now in a position to see that if we treat this debate as being concerned solely with the objective content of concepts, then, unless it is assumed that the logical order is a mere replica of the real order no metaphysical conclusion can be drawn directly from the irreducibility in the logical order between concepts of value and empirical concepts. On the other hand if this assumption be made regarding the relationship between the logical and the real order then we are carried immediately to an ultimate dualism of value and fact in the real world which must necessarily exclude the possibility of finding an intelligible relation between them. Bearing these reflections in mind, we can now turn to a consideration of the position of the opponents in the debate and the possible efficacy of their arguments. If we limit ourselves to the question of objective content, the argument centres in the pos-

/possibility or impossibility of replacing the term "good" in our thought by a term or terms belonging to a natural science, without altering the meaning or intention of our thought. By what means can we settle the debate at this level? In Chapter II we have already considered Moore's method of direct "inspection". The difficulty here is that, in fact, it leaves no room for debate, either we "see" that when we consider the term "good" it means something different from what we mean (or could mean) when we use any term of natural science, or we do not "see" his.

Ewing's argument (1) from the character of necessity revealed in certain value judgments might seem to provide ground for debate, but it remains to be seen whether it necessarily carries him in the direction in which he wishes to go. "When we see that something is intrinsically good,...we see that it must be so," whereas "what we learn by observation might always have been different, at least for anything we can see." The final phrase of this statement makes it clear that the necessity to which Ewing refers is a characteristic of our mode of judgment, and not necessarily of what is judged. The necessity characterises the connection between the terms of our judgment. It would seem that if Ewing could persuade his opponents that no proposition composed

/composed solely of empirical concepts ever bore this mark of necessity he would thereby prove his case: his opponents would be forced to admit that value propisitions cannot be composed solely of empirical concepts.

We have seen, however, that an objectivism of non-natural qualities or characteristics is not the only alternative to classical naturalism. Is it self-evident that the further elements beyond the empirical concepts of a value judgment are genuine concepts? It seems to us that, in the last resort, Ewing must fall back on an intellectual intuition of the real characteristic of intrinsic goodness, in order to establish the critical value of the 'object of thought'; but how do we know that we really "see" what we think we "see"; and how do we distinguish between the concept of the quality or characteristic and the characteristic itself?

It seems to us therefore that Ewing's position does not, in the last resort, differ in any important way from that of Moore. We are thrown back on the simple inspection of our "objects of thought" whether these be considered solely in the logical order i.e. as concepts, or whether as "real entities" reached directly by the act of intellectual intuition. In neither case do we find grounds for fruitful debate: the method of "simple inspection" leaves us in the position in which all we can say is that we

/we either do or do not "see" the concept or real entity in question and its (ill defined) singularity. The examination which we have made so far seems to lead us to the conclusion that the debate is simply a dispute about what is present in a recognised field in which some people do not "see" what others "see". This is a peculiar situation and we immediately feel a certain dissatisfaction with this description of what we took to be a philosophical problem. For it seems to us that philosophical enquiry is ultimately characterised by a two-fold aim; to discover at once the ultimate nature of the real, and the ultimate principle of certitude, or of knowledge of the real. These are not two separate aims which can be pursued in isolation from each other; in the work of every philosopher they are in a dynamic relation to each other. Now, while the naturalist and the non-naturalist may seem to be disputing about what is present in a given field, in fact, they each have their own conception of what this given field is, and this conception is influenced by their view of the ultimate principle of knowledge. Moore and the neo-realists resolutely refuse to raise epistemological questions but even they are not free of an epistemological theory, viz. the dogmatic identification of the logical and the real order. But already this means that this 'given field' - a field which we can describe

/describe indifferently in terms of real or subsistent entities, "objects of thought" or "concepts" - will be different from the given field of an empiricist, different again from the "field" of a rationalist. It is only if we realise this that we can understand the philosophical position of the naturalist-non-naturalist debate, and of Ewing's place and significance in this debate.

The reason therefore, why the naturalist and the non-naturalist disagree on what they "see" is that they are not, as it were "looking in the same place" and if we want to appreciate more deeply their respective positions we must try to understand the underlying epistemological principles which dominate their philosophical enquiry. If we consider the debate from this point of view it seems clear that the point at issue between the disputants bears precisely on the question of deciding which elements in our thought really are concepts having a function to play when thought is considered solely from the point of view of its cognitive reference to the real. The field of such concepts seems narrower for the naturalist than for the non-naturalist. The naturalist holds that we can know only those facts whose existence is testified (or can be testified) by the data of sensible experience. The non-naturalist holds that our knowledge extends beyond this field and acquaints us

/us with a non-sensible reality which can only be reached by thought. The disagreement therefore concerns the nature of the field open to our cognitive activity. And, while at first sight (and, it would appear in Ewing's own opinion) the difference seems to concern simply the width of variety of this field, on closer inspection we shall see that the "field" itself changes in nature as the epistemological assumptions of the contestants are brought to light. The explanation of this lies in the fact to which we have already drawn attention: there is an intimate connection between the two aims which characterise philosophical enquiry viz. to discover at once the ultimate principle of certitude, and the ultimate nature of the real. At what point and under what conditions can we be certain that we possess an adequate representation of the real? The search for these conditions is the search for the principle of intelligibility which will serve as the ultimate principle of one knowledge. But at the same time this principle of intelligibility will and, indeed, must mark out for us the sphere of the real which can be reached by our cognitive activity and this marking out will be not simply one of delineation in extension, but of characterisation. Thus empiricism and rationalism necessarily leave their mark on the character of the real which they claim to render intel-

/intelligible. Reality for the empiricist is in the last resort reduced to sense data, real or possible; reality for the rationalist is, in the last resort, reduced to the abstract entities of our conceptual thought, together with their logical connections.

Now, Ewing has said that empiricism and rationalism represent tendencies rather than exclusive positions: "By rationalists in general I mean those who emphasise the a priori factor, by empiricists those who emphasise more the empirical factor. I do not mean those, if any, who altogether deny one of these factors. Short of declaring either to be the only factor in knowledge there are all manner of shades of view." (1) As we have pointed out, this description of empiricism and rationalism may be true in general if we limit ourselves to an external and superficial view of examples of each type. But if we place ourselves within the movement of thought of either "tendency" we find that we are carried to a more and more exclusive and radical formulation of the primacy of one "factor" of knowledge over the other: indeed it becomes inappropriate to speak of "factor", for we ultimately reach the position where the factor has been raised to the status of the real principle or source of knowledge.

Now, it seems clear that the consistent naturalist treats sense not simply as a factor in the process whereby

/whereby our ethical knowledge is acquired, but as the source and principle of that knowledge. On the other hand, if our examination of Ewing's thought is accurate it is evident that, for him, it is, in the last resort, thought, as bearing on the necessary connections of abstract entities, which is the source and principle of our knowledge of value. And we have already dealt in detail with the general difficulty of bridging the gap between the world of thought and the world of sense. Ewing wishes to consider thought and sense as factors in the acquisition of knowledge, but, in fact, the implications of his whole epistemology force him to treat each of them as autonomous principles of knowledge. The metaphysical dualism which this carries with it is, as we have noted, unacceptable to him, and we consider that we are justified in concluding from this that the direction of his thought is towards an idealistic rationalism which, in spite of his claim to diverge as little as possible from naturalism, (1) will place him at the opposite extreme from the naturalists. The ultimate point at issue between Ewing and the naturalists is the nature of the source from which the mind draws intelligibility or the principle in which the mind finds intelligibility. For the naturalist this source is to be found in the data of sensible experience; that is intelligible which is verifiable in sense experience.

/experience. For Ewing the mind finds intelligibility in the necessary connections which it intuits intellectually with no more than psychological aid from the data of sensible experience. If, however, this is the position between the combatants of the debate then it is clear that because the contestants start from different principles of intelligibility there is in fact no possibility of resolving the debate.

It seems to us that the efforts of Ewing to provide an epistemological background for the non-naturalism of Moore reveal clearly that this debate must carry us into the wider and more fundamental dispute between empiricism and rationalism. Once this is realised we see that the attempt to give a clear meaning to the terms of the debate between naturalism and non-naturalism is successful precisely in the measure in which this formulation carries with it the impossibility of solution. "Naturalism" can only be successfully described in the face of "non-naturalism" and yet to formulate either clearly and distinctly is by that very fact to destroy any possible basis for discussion. The naturalist, as an empiricist, cannot begin to accept the "elements" offered by the non-naturalist. And the non-naturalist, as a rationalist, cannot accept the elements offered him by the naturalist. Each must, by the very nature of his position <u>transform</u> the foreign elements in accordance with the demands of his

/his principle of knowledge, and in doing so he necessarily cuts himself off from the possibility of debate.

This conclusion seems to us to be borne out by the transition from "naturalism" to "subjectivism" which reflects, in the field of ethical analysis, that general development towards a critical formulation of the empiricist principle which marks the work of the logical positivists. Unable to ignore the difference between ethical thought and scientific thought, they attempt to account for it in a way which will leave intact the empiricist principle of knowledge, by denying that the difference characterises the logical or intentional order as such. And finally we can appreciate the basis for the tendency among logical positivists to treat the arguments of non-naturalists and intuitionists as "rationalistic." (Ref. I)

Conclusion.

It may, however, be objected that in placing Ewing in the ranks of the "rationalists" we are, in fact, misrepresenting his thought, for of him it cannot fairly be said that he ignores or transforms the empirical elements. His argument with the empiricists is not that these elements cannot be treated as ultimate but that they are not the sole elements which an attentive and unprejudiced examination of human knowledge reveal as determinants of

/of that knowledge. We concede this objection, but we think that we have shown that Ewing fails to prove his case against the empiricists, and that, within his epistemology, the only escape from the metaphysical dualism which he finds unacceptable would be to confer ultimate and absolute primacy on the a priori factor in our knowledge. We admit, however, that this is not Ewing's own professed position, and that his urgent preoccupation is to preserve the value of the empirical elements in our knowledge while showing the necessity of recognising the presence of other, non-empirical, elements in that same knowledge. "Kant again I think," Ewing writes (1), "is right in holding that mere sense experience cannot give any knowledge; in order to give knowledge or even a judgment expressing opinion the material must be to some extent organised. We cannot have content without form, and this form cannot be discovered by merely receiving sense impressions passively." Thought and sense must according to Ewing, co-operate, if we are to have knowledge. If this however, is the initial position from which Ewing develops his epistemology we consider that, nevertheless, we have shown that Ewing does not provide for "co-operation", and that there is a falling apart of sense and thought and their respective objects.

The effect of this divorce can, we think, be clearly

/clearly shown in the definition of "good" which Ewing proposes, and which we must now examine.

REFERENCES. CHAPTER IV.

Page 151.

(1) D. of G. p.83.

(2) D. of G. pp.83, 84.

Page 154.

(1) See D. of G., especially Chapter II.

(2) D. of G. p.72.

(3) D. of G. p.58, footnote (8).

Page 155.

(1) D. of G. p.75.

(2) D. of G. p.56.

(3) D. of G. p.57.

(4) D. of G. p.53.

(5) D. of G. p.54.

Page 156.

(1) L.T.A.P.P. p.243.

Page 158.

(1) See D. of G. p.36.

Page 159.

(1) P.F. Strawson, "Ethical Intuitionism", Philosophy, Vo.XXIV, No.88 (Jan.1949), p.30. See also the same writer's review of "The Definition of Good" in Mind, Jan.1949, p.93, where he writes, "Ewing wants the 'justification', the 'reasonableness' itself, to be 'out there': a very thin thread, discerned with the intuitive eye".

(2) Art. Cit., pp.28-31.

(3) See, e.g., W.D. Ross, The Right and the Good, Oxford 1930, pp.17-20.

Page 160.

(1) D. of G. p.195.

REFS. CHAPTER IV (Contd.)

Page 161.

(1) See D. of G. pp.195,196.

(2) D. of G. p.53.

Page 162.

(1) Ayer draws attention to the obscurity of the relation between the natural characteristics of a situation and its value quality when he writes, "For let it be granted that someone who contemplates some natural situation detects in it something which he describes as 'goodness' or 'beauty' or 'fittingness' or 'worthiness to be approved'. How this experience of goodness, or whatever it may be, is supposed to be related to the experiences which reveal the natural features of the situation has not yet been made clear, but I take it that it is not regarded merely as their effect": "Analysis of Moral Judgments", Horizon, Sept.1949, p.177.

(2) Idealism, p.189.

(3) Idealism, p.130.

Page 163.

(1) D. of G. p.36.

Page 164.

(1) D. of G. p.53.

Page 166.

(1) D. of G. p.44.

Page 168.

(1) D. of G. p.169.

Page 172.

(1) See, e.g. Ayer L.T. & L., Chapter VI, especially pp.104, 105.

(2) L.T. & L. p.105.

(3) Strawson, art. cit., p.32.

(4) L.T. & L., p.104.

(5) L.T. & L., p.107.

REFS. CHAPTER IV (Contd.)

Page 173.
(1) L.T. & L., p.105.
(2) L.T. & L., p.108.

Page 175.
(1) "Ethics and Belief in God", p.388.

Page 176.
(1) Idealism, p.251, footnote (1).
(2) "Ethics and Belief in God", p.388.
(3) D. of G. P.53.

Page 181.
(1) D. of G. p.53.

Page 186.
(1) Idealism, p.251, footnote (1).

Page 187.
(1) D. of G. p.169.

Page 189.
(1) Strawson, loc.cit.

Page 190.
(1) Idealism, p.74.

CHAPTER V. EWING'S DEFINITION OF GOODNESS.

Introduction.

The purpose of this chapter is to examine, with reference to the particular example of the concept of goodness, the uniting of natural and non-natural elements in an intelligible unity. We shall see that, while Ewing's account of both the simple concept of fittingness and the complex concept of goodness requires that the division between natural and non-natural be broken down, his epistemological treatment of these elements renders this impossible. According to Ewing it is the presence of the non-natural relation of fittingness which transforms the world of "matters of fact" into the world of values. Thus, the concepts which have application in this letter world are concepts of relational characteristics which are alike in so far as they all contain the "note" of fittingness and which differ in the empirical "notes" which they contain. Hence, goodness, badness, and indifference, are so many forms in which the characteristic of "fitting to be-ed" may be specified, all difference between them lying solely in the empirical content with which the "-ed" is filled up. In all cases of value terms or concepts there is one thing, and one thing only which saves them from a complete naturalistic analysis

/analysis and that is the note of fittingness. This relation is ubiquitous and, as such, it in no way provides us with a distinction between the good, the bad, and the indifferent. It seems therefore to have at once nothing to do and everything to do. It has nothing to do in the sense that all distinction of value and disvalue is to be sought outside of it in the sensible data of the situation. It has everything to do in the sense that no observation of what is given in sensible experience can ever enable us to pronounce a value judgment, for the latter bears the mark of necessity and thus points to an origin other than sensible experience. Hence the appeal to intuition as the sole justification of the reality value of our value judgments, and the consequent impasse with those who do not "see" what Ewing "sees". If, however, Ewing abandons what we may call this last vestige of rationalism, he must fall into empiricism, for, apart from this a priori, non-natural relation of fittingness, discernable by Ewing's intuitive eye, the "real" to which value judgments refer is composed entirely of those natural elements recognised by his empiricist opponents. The most important question therefore for an understanding of Ewing's definition of goodness is the question of what exactly is meany by "fittingness", and, as we shall see, we are led

/led to ask whether, in fact, this notion can be rendered intelligible in isolation from the terms between which it is supposed to hold. It will become clear that the element in value facts signified by "fitting" cannot itself be treated as sufficient to transform the world of "naturalistic" facts into the world of value facts, but that this element can only be rendered intelligible in the light of certain other elements which cannot be treated as "naturalistic" in the sense in which Ewing employs this term. We shall suggest that, in order to render the notion of fittingness intelligible, it is necessary to present it within a relational unity of terms whose critical value transcends the empirical data to which they may be applied. In the final chapter we shall sketch briefly the metaphysical theory of this relational unity which is to be found in the Thomist doctrine of being-in-potency and being-in-act.

Section 1. The Meaning of "Good".

Moore and Ewing agree in recognising the term "good" as non-natural; for Moore, however, this term is simple and thus indefinable, while for Ewing it is definable. "Good" means "fitting object of a pro-attitude" (1). This, according to Ewing is "a strict definition of what 'good' means" (2); when we apply the word "good" to an

/an object we are asserting that that object is characterised by having, or standing in, the relation of fittingness to a pro-attitude. This relational characteristic is not something entailed by the goodness of the object; it is, quite simply, that in which the goodness of the object consists. According to Ewing we can form a concept of this "abstract distinguishing feature which belongs to all good things" (1). This concept, the concept of the relational property which <u>is</u> goodness, is thus a complex concept of which the components or notes are <u>fittingness</u> and <u>pro-attitude</u>. It must, therefore, be these which together express the content of our thought when we think of goodness. We shall first note briefly the characteristics of these two components. The first point to notice is that this complex concept is non-natural in virtue of <u>one of its components only</u>, namely, fittingness (2). "Pro-attitude" is, itself, quite clearly considered by Ewing to be a natural term. It is "intended to cover any favourable attitude to something. It covers, for instance, choice, desire, liking, pursuit, approval, admiration" (3).

The concept of goodness, then, is non-natural by virtue of its other component, fittingness. This term, borrowed from Professor Broad (4) is, according to Ewing, the term which renders most satisfactorily the content of

/of our thought when we say of an action that it ought to be done, or avoided, and when we do not necessarily mean to include in this judgment the thought that the commission or omission of the act constitutes "a moral obligation which we must fulfil or be guilty of sin" (1). Ewing points out that the concept of strict moral obligation presupposes the concept of fittingness, since we cannot be under the moral obligation to perform an act unless it is, or is believed to be, the act appropriate to, or fitting, the situation. The two concepts are, however, distinct, fittingness concerning the relation between an action and its environment, while moral obligation is "something analagous to an imperative on the agent" (2). Fittingness, then, constitutes part of the significance of the term "ought", but since this latter term is also employed to indicate moral obligation, its use is not free from ambiguity, and it is advisable to employ the more technical term "fittingness" rather than the ambiguous term "ought" to indicate the non-natural component of the concept of goodness. Furthermore, fittingness is not limited to the relation between an <u>action</u>, in the strict sense of the term, and its environment; it may also hold between psychological states and an environment, whereas, according to Ewing, moral obligation can only concern actions (3).

We may say, therefore, that Ethics contains at least two non-natural concepts (the concept of moral obligation may constitute a third, but this does not concern us here), of which one is indefinable, and the other definable in terms of it together with a certain natural term; and the autonomy of Ethics is safeguarded by the non-naturalism of the concept of fittingness (1). In this concept, the concept of a unique irreducible relation, lies the ultimate limit of ethical analysis. From it, together with the concept of pro-attitude is constituted the complex concept of goodness. Now are we to envisage the "union" of these two concepts in this complex concept? This is the question which will occupy us in what follows.

Section 2. "Fittingness".

This term is, as we know, indefinable. We can, however, say something about it, and, in particular, that it is a non-natural relation, and, like other non-natural relations (e.g., the "logical connections" which we considered in Chapter III), it holds directly and in the first place between "objective characteristics". Moreover, while these latter do not exist in isolation, but always occur as characterising particular existents, this condition of their "real existence" does not affect their intelligible content nor their intel-

/intelligible connections. Thus, epistemological priority belongs to the universal propositions which assert intelligible connections as holding between objective facts as such and in isolation from their embodiment in particular given instances. Ethics, then, as a science will be based on a number of universal propositions, each asserting the relationship of fittingness to hold between a certain objective fact and the objective fact indicated by the term "pro-attitude" (1).

Now, Ewing says (2) that "relations between terms can only occur within a wider unity combining the terms". And he goes on to say that in the case of universals the wider unity is "a relational system, by which I mean a set of relations arranged in a determinate order, under a given determinable such that some a priori inferences are possible within the system. I am inclined to think that all relations between universals fall within some such system or other". These remarks may be applied to the case before us, for it does seem that, in Ewing's view, certain universal ethical propositions exhibit the features referred to in the above quotation as characterising a relational system. In the final chapter of THE DEFINITION OF GOOD Ewing considers the relative weight to be attached to intuition and to the coherence test in establishing prima facie

/*facie* duties (which constitute an important sphere of "fitting objects of a pro-attitude") and he argues that certain *a priori* inferences are possible between different *prima facie* duties (1). Let us therefore consider the relation of fittingness as the determinable of a set of determinate relations which together provided the conditions of a system of universal ethical propositions. The question here is: in what does the relation between determinable and determinates consist? At first sight the answer may appear simple. It would seem that the determinable, the abstract relation of fittingness, is rendered determinate by the addition to it of the concept of some one objective fact on the one side, and the concept of pro-attitude on the other side, or, since pro-attitude itself *covers* a variety of types, we may go further and render the relation more determinate by specifying a certain type of pro-attitude, e.g., the attitude of desiring. We must note, however, that what we have done here is to employ something *natural* to render natural something *non-natural*. Such determination must clearly be extrinsic, for the non-natural, as such, *in no way* contains the natural, and *vice versa*. Once this is realised we see that it is not so easy to discover the type of relation which exists between this determinable, fittingness, and its determinates. In a footnote to the above quotation from IDEALISM Ewing

/Ewing writes, "It seems obvious that the distinction between determinate and determinable applies to relations as well as qualities", but he does not state in what exactly this distinction consists. It seems quite clear that the distinction between fittingness as a determinable, and fittingness as this appears in a set of relations connecting certain objective facts and certain types of pro-attitude, is not the same kind of distinction as that which exists between, for example, the determinable colour, and its determinates, red, green, etc.... Colour in some way contains the differences which mark off one colour from another, whereas in the case we are considering the <u>determinate</u> relations of fittingness (which constitute the "sets of relations") are distinguished from each other by that which is essentially extrinsic to the determinable.

We do not want to insist too far on the applicability of Ewing's remarks on relational system to the case of the universal propositions of Ethics, but these considerations serve to underline the difficulties we find in trying to determine the relation between fittingness and the natural elements with which it is united in value facts or situations. According to Ewing, all value facts are characterised by a non-natural relational characteristic, and this is the only non-natural

/natural feature of the situation. Now, as we have already shown, all difference between value facts must lie strictly outside the relation of fittingness and must in no way affect its intrinsic nature, if we are to preserve the strict division between the natural and the non-natural. Value facts, that is to say, agree with each other so far as there is present in them all one and the same relation, fittingness; they differ only in what concerns their natural characteristics. But if this is so then we must be able to abstract from each and every fact of value one and the same common element, which is the unique relation of fittingness. And the unity of all value facts must be explained by the fact that there is present in each one of them, in exactly the same way, one single identical element. This element is precisely what is indicated by the term "fittingness"; we cannot even add the specification "pro-attitude", for this would be to introduce something extrinsic and natural. When, however, we reflect on this analysis we hardly think that Ewing would be satisfied with its results. For, what is to save Ethics from being immersed in a natural science now appears as a very thin abstraction, something which is not in itself sufficient to distinguish not merely the good from the bad, but both from the indifferent, since there is "a fitting attitude to indifferent things, the

/the attitude of ignoring them" (1). We are thus led to support the criticism of P.F. Strawson when he writes (2), "Ewing considers that in all situations in which any or no reaction is fitting, something identical is present: the appropriateness to their objects of laughter, performance, tears, indifference, love, fear and loathing is one and the same intellectually discernable relation; unique, non-natural, and ubiquitous". Indeed, pursuing the analysis in this direction we seem to reach an entirely abstract relation purely formal in character, which obtains all content and positive significance from what is external to itself and natural.

If we are to avoid this final implication of the analysis it seems to us that we must go back and question the initial step which was to treat the relation of fittingness <u>in abstraction</u> from its terms. This, we argued, must be possible on Ewing's own distinction of natural and non-natural elements. But it is most pertinent to question this possibility. Can we, in fact, form a concept of the relation of fittingness without including in our thought the concepts of the terms between which it holds? It is clear that the <u>logic</u> of the term "relation" requires for its elucidation the use of the term "term". (3) It is not, however, this purely

/purely formal structure of "terms" and "relation" which concerns us here. What we want to know is whether we can give content to a relation which is the relation named "fittingness" without in some way specifying the nature of the terms between which this relation holds. If we cannot do this then it follows that we cannot abstract and consider in isolation this non-natural element of value facts or situations. If we accept this line of argument it is possible to defend Ewing from Strawson's criticism, but it remains to be seen whether it does not force Ewing into rejecting the strict division of concepts into those which are natural and those which are non-natural, and such a rejection would affect very deeply his whole epistemological position.

Ewing says something which is relevant to this question of the abstraction of the relationship of fittingness in IDEALISM (1): he writes, "For a relation to occur at all a necessary though not always sufficient, condition of its occurrence must be found in the nature of its terms;" and he continues in the same context, "....most, if not all, kinds of relation presuppose a specific common character, usually or always of the type called by Johnson a determinable, in the related terms, without which the assertion of the specific relation would

/would be not merely false but absurd in the way which the questions - is virtue yellow? or is the British Constitution a triangle? - are absurd to anybody who knows in the barest outline what the words mean". In this second quotation Ewing makes it clear that he does not intend to make a categorical statement about all relations, but we may with profit utilise his remarks about "absurdity". He would, we suggest, admit that it was not merely wrong but "absurd", for anyone who knows "in the barest outline" what the word "fitting" means (when used in value judgments), to ask - is benevolence a fitting object of polishing?, or, is carbon dioxide a fitting object of admiration? How are we to explain this absurdity? Is it grounded in the nature of the terms, one of which in each case is such as to preclude the occurence of the relation in question, or is it simply the outcome of our tendency to dismiss the unexpected as the impossible - or <u>absurd</u>? Is it simply the case that there is a point at which I stop finding things fitting and "rule" that things of a certain sort, and <u>only</u> of a certain sort, can stand as terms in a judgment of fittingness? This last suggestion would give us an explanation of the presence of "universal propositions" in Ethics and of their "necessity". But the consequence of such an explanation would be the denial that such neces-

/necessity in any way reflects a characteristic of the real order. We know that such a "linguistic theory" of a priori propositions is unacceptable to Ewing; consequently another explanation of the "absurdity" must be sought.

Reflecting on the first of the above two quotations, we seem forced to admit that the "nature of the terms" is relevant not merely to the occurrence of the relation in fact, but to its intelligibility as thought by the mind, or, to put it clearer, to its presence in the mind as a fixed and clear objective content. We do not think that Ewing himself would object to this, for, in THE DEFINITION OF GOOD (1) he writes, "Granted that a concept is simple and unanalysable, the correct point of view may be to look upon it not as for that reason intelligible in itself, but rather as being too much of an abstraction to stand by itself". We seem justified in concluding, therefore, that the meaning of the term "fittingness" cannot be grasped in abstraction from the nature of the terms which this relation relates. And, in Ewing's terminology, we can say that the nature of these terms contribute to the intelligibility of the concept of fittingness itself. But we now meet the gravest difficulty which has threatened us throughout this examination.

/examination. Since, in the real order, the terms between which this relation of fittingness holds are "empirical facts" it is clear that the concepts through which we present to ourselves the nature of these terms will be what Ewing calls "natural" or "empirical" concepts. Therefore the difficulty before us is to understand how it is that a non-natural concept can be rendered intelligible by a natural concept.

Non-natural concepts, are for Ewing concepts which are "not derived from mere empirical observation" (1), from which we may conclude that natural concepts are so derived. And he talks of non-natural concepts as "the fruit of an intuitive insight into the real" (2). However, while these remarks tell us that these two types of concept have entirely distinct non-conceptual sources, the one "empirical observation" and the other non-sensible perception (or intellectual intuition), they do not answer the question which is vital from the point of view of intelligibility, namely, what is their critical value as media in the cognitive act? Does each type of concept merely reflect (at the conceptual level) the datum from which it has been "derived", or the "contact" of which it is the "fruit", or does conceptual activity raise the data to a new level of intelligibility, and, if so, how would Ewing describe the principle governing such conceptual

/conceptual activity? These are questions which our examination of the Thomist theory of being as the first intelligible in Chapter I, and, especially, in Section 2 of that chapter, lead us to ask, and we have not been able to find answers to them in Ewing's work. But is seems clear to us that they are questions of vital importance in this present context. Thus, it is clear that if we treat these two types of concept as each referring to, and having its critical value exhausted in what is given to sensible observation (in the case of natural or empirical concepts), and in what is given to intellectual intuition (in the case of non-natural or a priori concepts) then, since these two types of "perception" have no common measure, it will follow that there will be no common measure in the concepts which are based on them. In this case we shall have two distinct orders of concepts, and it is evident that members of one order cannot be called upon to clarify the content of members of the other order.

In the case before us, therefore, we can put our difficulty in the following way:- If by a "natural concept" Ewing means a concept whose critical value (as a medium of knowing the real) is exhausted in the sense data, actual and possible, which justify its application in particular cases, then it is hard to see how such a concept can contribute to the intelligible content of a

/a concept whose content is essentially and exclusively intellectual. Again, if the terms between which the relation of fittingness is conceived as holding do no more than provide a short-hand registration of the data of sensible and introspective observation then a mere increase in the number of such data will in no way increase the intelligibility of the non-natural relation which is supposed to connect groups of such data.

We seem, therefore, to be faced by two alternatives, each of which is in contradiction with the analysis we have made. We must either relegate the function of the empirical data to being a mere psychological condition for the emergence of a clear and distinct idea of fittingness, unique and purely intellectual, or we must go to the opposite extreme and identify each case of fittingness with the empirical data which condition its occurrence in each particular instance, so that, when we have given a full description of the situation <u>in empirical terms</u>, we shall have exhausted the <u>meaning</u> of the situation. Once again we find ourselves placed before the alternatives of empiricism and rationalism, a dilemma which seems forced on us if we try to remain faithful to Ewing's epistemology, but one which his account of value terms demands that we transcend. The first alternative is unacceptable to Ewing because, as we have shown, the terms between which the relation is considered as holding are

/are required not merely as psychological aids in the formation of the non-natural concept of fittingness; they are necessary as contributing to the intelligible content of that concept. The second alternative is also unacceptable to Ewing for it denies that there is present in all value situations one unique non-natural element.

In this Section we have examined the concept of fittingness and we have attempted to determine the conditions of its intelligibility. We have shown that, following Ewing's remarks on the nature of relations in general, and his comments in THE DEFINITION OF THE GOOD on simple, unanalysable notions, it seems clear that we cannot "think of" or form a concept of fittingness in abstraction from the thought of the nature of the terms between which it holds; we may say that the notion of fittingness is <u>conditioned in its intelligibility as a notion</u>.

This conclusion is important for it suggests that we can only provide an intelligible content for the term "fittingness" by viewing it in a wider intelligible unity, within which the relation obtains its <u>meaning</u>. If, however, this is the case, it follows that while it may still be the case that fittingness is a distinguishing mark or feature of all value (and <u>dis</u>-value) phenomena, it will no

/no longer be possible to treat it as being that which, in and by itself, transforms the world of "facts of existence" (or "matters of fact") into the world of "facts of value". We cannot look on the latter as the result of the simple "injection" into the empirical world of a unique, non-natural element, the relation of fittingness; nor can we treat the so-called concept of fittingness as the mental expression of a purely intellectual intuition which exhausts its object in a direct vision, and which requires, at the most, psychological aid from empirical observation. The inadequacy of a juxta-position of totally disparate elements at the perceptual level is matched by the inadequacy of totally disparate elements at the conceptual level.

Section 3. "Goodness".

We must now consider the effects of this analysis on our understanding of the complex concept of goodness, which, according to Ewing, owes its place among the concepts of value to the fact that it contains the note of fittingness. It is by reason of the latter that the characteristic of goodness is "non-natural", and thus falls outside the order of purely empirical phenomena and their laws.

In the light of the analysis we have just made we can now appreciate the difficulties of this theory of the nature of goodness. Ewing appears to think that we can

/can form separate concepts of fittingness and goodness and that, comparing them, we see that they differ in that in the concept of goodness there is added to the notion of fittingness the concept of pro-attitude. Furthermore, this latter concept can be considered apart, or in abstraction, from its "combination" with fittingness, and when it is thus considered we see that it is a purely natural concept. But here again we face the same problem: can we form one concept of elements which, when considered in isolation from each other, are viewed through concepts which have no common principle of intelligibility?

How does Ewing envisage the union of these disparate elements? We can obtain some indication from a passage in THE DEFINITION OF THE GOOD where he explains why he defines "good" in terms of "ought" rather than "ought" in terms of "good". He writes (1), "I found that I could not form a clear concept of intrinsic goodness without including in it the concept of ought, and that I could form a clear concept of ought without including in it the concept of good. Ought is also a wider concept in extension, for there are mental attitudes which we can describe as fitting which are yet not directed towards the good. There are also fitting mental attitudes possible towards evil things, the anti-attitudes, and even a fitting attitude

/attitude towards indifferent things, the attitude of ignoring them".

We must interpret this statement very carefully. At first sight it may appear to give us a straight forward answer to the question of the formation of the complex concept of goodness. Good, so it would seem from this quotation is a concept which is formed by specifying as "pro-attitude" the type of attitude (or mental attitude) which stands in the relation of fittingness to an object, and this specification is by means of empirical "notes". " 'Pro-attitude' ", Ewing writes "is intended to cover any favourable attitude to something. It covers, for instance, choice, desire, liking, pursuit, approval, admiration" (1). These attitudes "have something in common that is opposed to the common element in condemning, shunning, fearing, regretting, etc., which would supply the corresponding definition of bad" (2). And he uses the terms "positive and favourable" to describe the former, "negative and hostile" to describe the latter. It is clear that, in his opinion, all such terms are natural and empirical, (and it is significant to note in passing that the way he describes the general term of pro-attitude - as "covering" a list of more specific attitudes - lends itself to a purely nominalistic interpretation of empirical concepts, and suggests that he accepts his empiricist

/empiricist opponents' treatment of these general terms). We may thus say that the complex concept of goodness is formed by the addition to the non-natural concept of fittingness of a natural concept containing the empirical notes indicated by the terms "favourable and positive". We must, however, examine closely the implications of this interpretation, bearing in mind our analysis of the "fittingness", where we argued that this notion had a "conditioned intelligibility: fittingness, we argued, was not intelligible in isolation from the nature of the terms between which it holds or can hold. We are now told that it can hold, not only between an object and a pro-attitude, but between an object and an anti-attitude, and, even between an object and an attitude of ignoring. We are also told that we (or, at least Ewing) can form a clear concept of fittingness without including in it the concept of good. Presumably, we can also form a clear concept of fittingness without including in it the concept of bad, or, again, without including in it the concept of indifferent. Clearly, then, none of the empirical notes which mark off pro-attitudes from anti-attitudes and either of these from attitudes of ignoring, contribute to the intelligibility of the concept of fittingness. Similarily, on the side of the other term of the relationship, which is indicated by the term "object", it is clear that here too those empirical notes which mark off good objects from bad objects and

/and either from indifferent objects, cannot contribute to its intelligibility, since fittingness applies in all three cases in exactly the same way: it is one and the same unique non-natural relation which is present in the three cases, only the empirical notes of the object and the attitude differing.

It is at this point that we can appreciate both the direction of Ewing's argument, and its weakness. We may be inclined to argue that, since all difference between good, bad, and indifferent objects lies in the empirical data, and since it is by these data that we recognise the object term of the relation of fittingness, it therefore follows that the one constant element present in all three cases is the relationship itself, the terms themselves differing in each case. But we see now that this argument will not hold. There must be something constant in the terms themselves, since the intelligibility of the relation presupposes the intelligibility of the terms. We cannot drop the terms "object" and "attitude" out of our final analysis: we cannot treat "fittingness" as the ultimate term of "ethical analysis": but what we must do is to give to the terms "object" and "attitude" a meaning which transcends the empirical differences between good, bad, and indifferent objects, and between pro, anti, and ignoring attitudes, and which serves to preserve the

/the relationship of fittingness which is realised by the correct "pairing" of object and attitude in each case. What is constant in each case is not the bare relation of fittingness, but a certain relational unity, which we may signify by the phrase "object-fitting-attitude".

If, however, this criticism is accepted, it follows that if we are still to maintain that no epistemological difficulty attaches to the formation of the complex concept of goodness, then we must be able to view the term "attitude" in the double role of, (1) contributing towards the intelligibility of fittingness, preserving its uniqueness in its diverse manifestations in the good, the bad, and the indifferent, and (2) being specified by the empirical notes signified by "pro", "anti", and "ignoring". Is this possible? It seems to us that on general considerations which have been indicated in this Chapter it is impossible, given the limits of Ewing's epistemology, for one and the same concept to fulfil this double role. We can, however, illustrate our difficulty more directly by considering the particular case of the concept of attitude and enquiring how Ewing himself views this notion.

Ewing frequently employs this term, often in conjunction with the term "mental"; but, unfortunately, he does not seem to consider it necessary to explain in detail

/detail what exactly he means by it. We can, it seems clear, take it that for him it is a natural concept, which, when pre-fixed by the term "mental" belongs to the science of Psychology. Moreover, he tells us explicitly that all the elements of his analysis (of goodness) are, with the exception of the relation itself (i.e., fittingness), purely psychological. (1) This being the case we may conclude that this concept contains the common element which is present in the three types of attitude, pro, anti, and ignoring, and that the concepts of these latter are formed by adding additional empirical notes in each case. In this way the second of the two roles referred to above can be fulfilled. When, however, we ask this same concept to fulfil the first demand we come across a difficulty. The question of the nature of scientific thinking and the function of the conceptual construction which it involves is extremely complex, and we cannot deal with it here. But it is important to note that in so far as Ewing does describe natural concepts as "concepts of a natural science" (2) the claim that "mental attitude" is a natural concept brings us before a serious obstacle when we attempt to clarify the concept of fittingness with the aid of the concept of mental attitude. The former has, as we have been told, a fixed identical content in all its manifestations, and this content is, in theory at least, discernable in the pure light of intel-

/intellectual intuition: the latter, on the contrary, has a content which is to some extent arbitrarily determined (there are different "schools" of empirical psychology and different "working rules" for marking off mental phenomena from non-mental phenomena, and different ways of dividing the sphere of the former), and which is open to alteration as the science which employs it progresses. How, then, can the "scientific" concept of mental attitude help us to "see clearly" in the concept of fittingness?

Let us suppose, however, that, in theory at least, it is possible to obtain a clearly fixed content for the term "mental attitude". Bearing in mind that this concept is natural, and that this term is synonymous with empirical, we may ask how such a concept can render the concept of fittingness intelligible. Ewing himself has provided us with the answer in his insistence on the fact that no amount of empirical observation or generalisation from empirically ascertainable facts can "produce" in our minds the idea of a non-natural entity, as is, for example, the relation of fittingness. The origin of non-natural ideas can in no way be found in sensible experience, though these ideas do arise in situations which are also qualified by empirically verifiable characteristics. We return, therefore, to the sole admissible function of sensible

/sensible experience in the "production" of non-natural ideas, namely, that of psychological aid. This, however, is not sufficient in order to meet the first demand put upon the concept of "mental attitude" in our analysis. It seems clear, therefore, that if the concept of mental attitude is a natural concept it cannot contribute to the intelligibility of the concept of fittingness. It follows from this that, while we can account for the specification of "mental attitude" by the addition of further empirical notes as are, for example, covered by the term "pro", we have gone no way towards explaining how fittingness is, or can be, rendered intelligible by the concept of mental attitude. And until we have explained this we have not explained the formation of the concept of goodness.

Conclusion.

Ewing claims as a distinction of his non-naturalistic theory the fact that its demands on the converted naturalist are very slight, since it requires the latter to accept only one non-natural element, the relation of fittingness (1). Our examination of this relation has shown that, in fact, the converted naturalist (and Ewing himself) must be prepared to accept much more, or, to place the problem in a wider and less misleading setting, must be prepared to reject the naturalist-non-naturalist division

/division in the sense in which this has been understood by Ewing, and, in his own view, by his naturalist opponents themselves. The epistemological theory which lies behind this distinction is totally inadequate to meet the demands put on it by Ewing's own analysis of the concept of goodness. In this concept it is impossible for us to separate out one unique non-natural element, fittingness. We have argued that Ewing's analysis of such value-terms as "good" and "bad" is faulty in that he considers that he has isolated the bare relation of fittingness, whereas this relation can only be rendered intelligible within a wider relational unity of object-fitting-attitude; and in this complex neither "attitude" nor "object" can be treated as natural terms, in the sense in which Ewing employs this word, opposing the "natural" to the "non-natural". If by a natural concept we take Ewing to mean a concept whose critical value is exhausted in the sense-data which occasion its application in particular cases, then we may put our point in the following way:- In the relational unity "object-fitting-attitude" the concepts of object and attitude must be viewed as possessing a critical value which is <u>not</u> exhausted in the manner just described. The terms "object" and "attitude" must be provided with a <u>meta</u> empirical meaning. We shall suggest how this may be done in the following chapter.

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Page 197.

(1) D. of G. p.152; "A Suggested Non-naturalistic Analysis of Good", Mind, Jan. 1939, pp.6-9.

(2) D. of G. p. 152.

Page 198.

(1) D. of G. p.171.

(2) D. of G. p.146.

(3) D. of G. p.149.

(4) See, e.g., Broad, Five Types of Ethical Theory, Kegan Paul, London 1944, p.164.

Page 199.

(1) D. of G. p.135.

(2) D. of G. p.133.

(3) D. of G. p.136.

Page 200.

(1) See, e.g., D. of G. p.146.

Page 201.

(1) See Chapter IV, pp.159-161.

(2) Idealism, p.189.

Page 202.

(1) See especially D. of G. p. 204, and p.208.

Page 205.

(1) D. of G. p.175.

(2) Mind, January 1949, p.94.

(3) See Idealism, p.138, "...a relation, if it is to be a relation at all, must unite some terms".

Page 206.

(1) Idealism, p.128.

Page 208.

(1) D. of G. pp.83-84.

REFS.

CHAPTER V (Contd.)

Page 209.

(1) D. of G. p.52.

(2) D. of G. p.39.

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(1) D. of G. p.174.

Page 215.

(1) D. of G. p.149.

(2) D. of G. p.150.

Page 219.

(1) D. of G. p.179.

(2) D. of G. p.36.

Page 221.

(1) D. of G. p.169.

CHAPTER VI. ONTOLOGICAL GOODNESS.

Introduction.

It was in following the general framework of Ewing's own thought that we were led to disagree with his analysis of the conceptual elements involved in judgments of value, and to substitute the complex relational unity of "object-fitting-attitude" for the unique and simple concept of fittingness. In doing so, however, we have set ourselves a problem not envisaged by Ewing, since, unlike him, we refuse to consider the concepts of object and attitude as naturalistic or empirical, in the sense in which Ewing employs these words. We have still, therefore, to provide an account of these terms which will enable us to view the relational unity of "object-fitting attitude" as an intelligible unity.

In order to do so we must review the argument we employed in Section 3 of the previous chapter. It was based on Ewing's own statement that the concept of fittingness is wider than the concept of goodness, since there is a fitting response to bad objects, namely, an anti-attitude, and also one to indifferent objects, namely, an attitude of ignoring. We argued that since this was the case, and since we had shown that fittingness itself could only be understood in connection with the terms between which it could hold, there must therefore be some-

/something common to the three types of object and to the three types of attitude over and above the differences between them, and it was as signifying this something found in all three types of object that we employed the term "object", and, similarly the term "attitude" was used to signify whatever it is that the three different attitudes have in common.

Section 1. Agreement in Difference.

The question we must now ask is how we are to envisage the relation between what is common and what is different in the three types of object and in the three types of attitude.

Let us consider the case of attitude. Are we to consider that there is one or a number of characteristics found in exactly the same way in all three attitudes, and that the differences between them lie outside these notes, so that, for example, the concept of pro-attitude is formed by adding to the concept of attitude the notes covered by the phrase "favourable and positive"? Or, are we to consider that the differences between, for example, pro-attitude and anti-attitude are actually contained within the notion of attitude itself so that we cannot say that these two types of attitude agree in so far as they possess in a like manner some one or a number of characteristics and disagree in the further

/further characteristics which each possesses?

The first interpretation would seem to be closer to the general line of Ewing's thought, for what we would then be doing would be to substitute, for the simple concept of fittingness, a complex concept which, like Ewing's concept of fittingness, is univocal; i.e., we should be treating "fitting-attitude" as something which is found instantiated in exactly the same way in its various applications, and which can be abstracted from these instances leaving aside the further notes which mark off the different "species" of fitting-attitude from each other. And we may note now that we <u>assumed</u> this interpretation when we were examining Ewing's own conception of "mental attitude". But we must now ask the question: can we form a concept of attitude which is <u>neither</u> a pro-attitude, <u>nor</u> an anti-attitude, <u>nor</u> an attitude of ignoring? It may be the case, to employ the phrase which Ewing uses in connection with "fittingness", that the concept "attitude" is <u>wider in extension</u> than the concept of pro-attitude, or of anti-attitude etc., but the crucial question is whether we go on from this to conclude that it is therefore <u>narrower in comprehension</u>. This must follow if we treat the concept as univocal, and it is precisely this that

/that we now put in question. To illustrate the same question from the complementary angle, we may ask whether we can form a concept of the differentiating marks, as, for example, those covered by the phrase "positive and favourable" and those covered by "negative and hostile", in abstraction from the concept of attitude itself? It is true that if we are confronted with two attitudes, e.g., one of desiring and one of aversion, we can say that we have two attitudes which differ in that one is directed towards an object, and the other is directed away from an object. But what is meant by "directed towards" and by "directed away" in this connection cannot be understood in abstraction from the notion of attitude itself. What this reflection suggests, however, is that the notion of attitude itself can only be grasped in connection with the notion of object; what differs in the two cases we are considering is the form in which the relational unity of attitude-object is realised. We can have desiring-attitudes and aversion-attitudes, but the desiring attitude is attidude as desiring, and the aversion-attitude is attitude as aversion. We cannot therefore say that there is one common element found in exactly the same way in the two cases, and which is specified by contrary notes. The similarity between the attitudes of desiring and aversion (which justifies them both being viewed through the same

/same concept of attitude) is realised in and through their differences.

A similar argument can be used to show that the term notion of object as it appears within the complex of attitude-object cannot be abstracted and considered in isolation from the specific notes which are supposed to mark off good objects from bad ones and from indifferent ones. Thus, it is as bad that an object is the object of an attitude, it is as indifferent that an object is the object of an attitude, it is as good that an object is the object of an attitude, and we cannot abstract from the differing objects one common note found in exactly the same manner in all of them, and which is signified by the phrase "object of attitude". We must, on the contrary, say that the similarity between the good, the bad, and the indifferent objects which is signified by "object of attitude" is realised in and through the differences between them. This point, however, can be shown more directly by drawing attention to the fact that, since "attitude to an object" and "object of an attitude" are correlative terms, the analogical structure of the concept of attitude must be matched by the analogical structure of the concept of object. Consequently it is the complex notion of the relational unity signified by "attitude-object" which must be treated as analogical, and thus as an idea which cannot be abstracted and considered in isol-

/isolation from its manifestation in differing cases.

However, since various and contrary manifestations of attitude and object can each be found we have to face the question of how we are to "pair off" object and attitude in each case in order to preserve the relational unity which each case exhibits. How are we to determine the type of object which "goes with" a pro-attitude, the type which "goes with" an anti-attitude, etc.? It is useless to say that anti-attitude is linked with a bad object, pro-attitude with a good object, since, according to Ewing, "object of anti-attitude" is at least part of what is meant by saying of an object that it is "bad", and similarly in the case of a good object. Furthermore, we can regard Ewing's argument for the necessity of including in our definitions of 'good" and of "bad" a further (non-natural) element as illustrating precisely the fact that mere empirical observation of the togetherness of a particular attitude and a particular object can never discover for us the presence of a stable and unchanging relational unity. Thus, one and the same object may, so he argues, in fact, be the object of opposing attitudes. With this we must agree: it is clear that if we confine the critical value of the terms "object" and "attitude" to the empirical data through which a particular attitude and a particular object are revealed to us, we can never reach more than a de facto

/facto conjunction between actual attitude and actual object.

We have, however, shown at length why we cannot accept Ewing's method for transforming the factual into necessary conjunction. What he argues for is the presence (discernible by the intuitive eye) in all value phenomena of one unique non-natural relation, which is found in exactly the same manner in all its instances. According to our analysis in Chapter V much more is required of the "converted naturalist" than the mere recognition and addition to his "naturalistic world" of a simple non-natural relation. This relation cannot in itself be viewed as sufficient to transform the world of matters of fact into the world of values.

Hence, the impossibility of accounting for the distinctive nature of value judgments by the sole recourse to empirical data leads us to demand a meta-empirical account of the terms "attitude" and "object". It does not follow that because, when they are given a purely "naturalistic" interpretation, they fail to provide us with one constant relational unity, these same terms, when given a meta-empirical interpretation, will equally fail.

Section 2. Ontological Goodness and the Existence of Bad Objects.

The Thomist theory of ontological goodness provides an answer to the problem we are considering. According to

/to this theory there is within the structure of reality a fundamental relational unity of being-in-potency and being-in-act: each finite being is in potency to further being and this potency expresses itself as a tendency or urge whose formal object is always being-in-act. It is, consequently, impossible that there should be a finite being which is not characterised by this urge or tendency, and it is impossible that there should be any being which, in so far as it does exercise being-in-act is not in this respect the "object" of this metaphysical tendency. The term which is employed to signify this tendency is the term "desire", and the term used to signify being as the object of this desire is the term "good" (1).

What we wish to suggest is that the relational unity of attitude-object finds its ultimate significance in the metaphysical relationship of being-in-potency - being-in-act. This relationship is metaphysical; that is to say, it characterises the being of things and is, consequently, not merely a relationship into which things can enter, but it is a relationship which no being can escape. Being-in-act is necessarily the object of being-in-potency. Being-in-potency necessarily desires being-in-act. Hence, in describing goodness as "being in so far as it is desirable" we must understand the term "desirable" in the sense of "able to be desired according to the metaphysical principles

/principles governing the order of being as such". And the sole condition which must be fulfilled in order that being should be "able to be desired" in this sense is that it should be in act. Hence there is no need to understand "desirable" as "fitting to be desired" in the sense in which Ewing employs this phrase, treating fittingness as a unique relation which is added to the terms signified by "desire" and "object" (1). His argument for the necessity of such an addition only has strength if we accept a naturalistic interpretation of the terms "desire" and "object". But when we give these terms their full metaphysical significance we see that of themselves they form a necessary relational unity which, far from contradicting empirical evidence, can itself be shown to be required if we are to give a coherent explanation of this evidence.

The doctrine that every being is, in a certain respect, (namely, in so far as it is, or exercises the act of being) good, and therefore able to become an object of desire would be rejected by Ewing on the ground that some beings are clearly bad. Thus, in Ewing's view, the doctrine of ontological goodness is plainly contradicted by the facts of experience. Ewing, indeed accepts without analysis the existence of bad things. Now it is true that the theory of ontological goodness implies that there is no being which, considered simply as being, is bad.

/bad. But in order to understand the import of this theory we must bear in mind that no finite being is simply being as such: each finite being is a being of a certain kind or nature, and it is through this nature that it exercises being-in-act. It is also in and through this nature that it desires more being, and, clearly, the "more being" which it desires must be "more being" of a kind that it can exercise in and through its nature. It does not follow therefore that, because so far as each finite being exercises the act of being it possesses ontological goodness, no finite being can, in its totality of act of being together with nature, be <u>really bad</u>. On the contrary, it seems to us that this theory does enable us to account for the <u>existence</u> of bad things in a manner which is more satisfactory than that which can be found in Ewing's theory.

In Ewing's theory a bad thing is, by definition, a "fitting object of an anti-attitude". This, however, is what is meant by calling a thing bad: it does not provide us with any <u>reason</u> for the badness of the bad thing. The same may be said in connection with the definition of a good thing. Now, Ewing states explicitly (1) that the "ground" of the goodness of a thing lies in the <u>factual characteristics</u> of what we pronounce good. The same, therefore, will be true of bad things; the ground or

/or reason of the badness of things must be sought in the natural or empirical characteristics of the thing judged bad. If, however, this is the case it follows that the difference between good things and bad things concerns solely what is natural or empirical. But the whole import of Ewing's theory is centred in the view that from empirical facts it is never possible to extract value facts. If so, then we must conclude that the difference between good things and bad things is not itself a difference in or of value. This same conclusion is forced on us if we compare the two definitions of goodness and badness: for, assuming that the term "fittingness" signifies one simple unique relation, the same in both definitions, we are left with only the natural terms "pro-attitude" and "anti-attitude" to mark the difference between what is meant by "good" and what is meant by "bad".

Finally, since Ewing recognises a third possible "species" of attitude which can enter into the relation of fittingness with an object, namely, the attitude of ignoring which is appropriate to indifferent objects, we may conclude that here too there is no difference in value between such an object and either a good or a bad object.

It is interesting to note that, with the inclusion of indifferent objects into the sphere of the relation of

/of fittingness Ewing seems to have established this relation as all pervasive, since, presumably, any object must be the "fitting object" of one or another of the three types of attitude. When we bear in mind that it is solely by this relation of fittingness that the world of empirical facts is transformed into the world of values we are tempted to make a comparison between the place of this unique non-natural entity in Ewing's system, and the place of ontological goodness in the Thomist theory of value. Both are all pervasive, and each fulfils the function of "establishing" the realm of value facts; that is to say, within their own systems each stands as the ultimate principle of all value facts. But here the similarity ends: Ewing's "fittingness" does not itself provide the ground of difference between good, bad, and indifferent objects; this is to be found in the realm of empirical facts, so that, in fact, the world of real values and real disvalues (i.e., bad things) has two different and entirely separate grounds between which there is no common principle of intelligibility. In the Thomist theory, on the other hand, the reality of value and the distinction between real disvalue and real value has one ultimate principle of intelligibility, and the distinction between good and bad objects is itself a distinction within the realm of value.

Section 1. Specific Goodness.

According to Thomist theory, all judgments of value (whether of good or bad objects) are made in the light of the notion of being considered as "object of desire": we can say that the notion of "being so far as it is desirable" provides the formality of all judgments of value. Whenever, therefore, we judge an object from the point of view of its value we are judging it from the point of view of its "being as desirable". But no finite being is sheer being as such; it is being as being of a certain kind. The act of being which it exercises (and which enables it to "fall under" the notion of "being as desirable") is exercised in and through its nature. Consequently, while it is still being in act which grounds our judgment of value this being is now determined to a certain kind of being, and when we ask whether the object is good we are asking whether being, as it is exercised in and through this particular nature, is "desirable". But immediately we see that in order to render this question intelligible we must turn to the other term of the relationship "being-in-potency - being-in-act." For, as such, being-in-potency desires purely and simply being-in-act. If then we introduce, as we have just done, a determination into the being-in-act whose desirability is in question, we must introduce a corresponding determination into the being

/being-in-potency which is in question, so that this latter can be viewed as expressing itself in a need or desire of a certain kind, or as belonging to a certain nature. Consequently, while this latter desire is, as always, desire for being in act, the determination of the desire (through the nature of the subject which has the desire) carries with it the determination of the being-in-act which is viewed as "desirable" to being-in-act of the sort which can be received by and exercised in the desiring subject. Hence, when we ask whether a particular object, or a particular kind of object is good there is and must be a reference to being-in-potency as this is expressed in and through a determinate nature; that is to say, there must be a reference to a particular kind of desiring subject.

At this level we can provide a meaning for the term "bad" which makes the distinction between "good" and "bad" a distinction within the realm of value itself. The level at which we are now viewing the relationship of being-in-potency - being-in-act is the level of beings which are composed of nature and act of being. To ask whether an object is good or bad at this level is to ask whether the being which it exercises in and through its nature contributes to or prevents the exercise of being in a subject as this is realised in and through the nature of that subject. Both judgments (of "good" and "bad") are made

/made within the formality of "being in so far as it is desirable", but "being" has now become specified to being as this can be exercised through the nature of the desiring subject. From this point of view an object is good if it contributes towards the actualisation of the potentialities of the subject under consideration, it is bad if it prevents or destroys such a possible actualisation. In both cases (of "goodness" and "badness") the points of reference are the same: (1) there is a reference to a desiring subject, and, (2) there is a reference to the formal object of this desiring subject, namely, the <u>complete actualisation of its being</u>. And what is being judged is the status of the object under consideration within the dynamic order constituted by the subject's tendency towards being-in-act. A "good" object is one which plays a part in this order, and a "bad" object is one which infringes this order. A "good" object is one which, in the exercise of <u>its</u> being through its nature, can contribute to the actualisation of the being of which the desiring subject is capable, a "bad" object is one which, in the exercise of <u>its</u> being, prevents or infringes on the exercise of being of which the desiring subject is capable. We see that in this dyhamic order there is room for opposing attitudes on the part of the subject in relation to which we are judging objects: as contributing towards this order a "good"

/"good" object is necessarily the object of a "pro-attitude", a bad object is necessarily the object of an "anti-attitude". Since each subject necessarily, in the measure in which it has not achieved the full actualisation of the being of which it is capable, desires "more being", each subject, from within this dynamic movement, must necessarily seek and welcome that which contributes towards its actualisation, and avoid and repel that which prevents or infringes upon its actualisation. And, we may add, it is also possible at this level to find a place for the attitude of ignoring, since we can envisage the possibility that the being of a particular object as exercised in and through its nature neither contributes towards nor infringes the realisation or actualisation of the being of a certain particular kind of subject.

It follows, therefore, on this theory, that a "good object" can equally be described as an object which contributes to the actualisation of the being of which a particular kind of subject is capable, or as the object of a pro-attitude, and a "bad object" as one which infringes or prevents the actualisation of the being of which a particular kind of subject is capable, or as the object of an anti-attitude.

We thus seem to approach Ewing's proposed definitions of "good" and "bad" in terms of "pro-attitude" and "anti-

"anti-attitude" respectively, but we have omitted what is, for him, the most important element in the definition, namely, the further element of "fittingness". The objection which Ewing would bring against our position can easily be seen, but we are now in a position to defend ourselves. We would entirely agree with Ewing that to judge an object good and to judge that someone or something is seeking it or desiring it is not to make one and the same judgment. Consequently, if the terms "object" and "pro-attitude" are interpreted naturalistically our analysis is unacceptable. A series of statements regarding the observable relation between the observable characteristics of a natural phenomenon and the observable behaviour of someone or something, described purely in empirical terms describes a natural event and we agree entirely with Ewing that from such a "matter of fact" no "fact of value" can be deduced or extracted. But, in the previous chapter, we have shown that Ewing's own theory of "fittingness" does itself require that a non-naturalistic interpretation be put on the terms "attitude" and "object", and, hence, on the terms "pro-attitude" and "anti-attitude". And in this present chapter we have attempted to attach a metaphysical significance to these terms in the light of the doctrine of being-in-potency - being-in-act. Against Ewing's objection we argue that to ask

/ask whether an object is "good" or "bad" is immediately to place ourselves within the formality of "being in so far as it is desirable", and to guide ourselves by the principle that each being desires the full exercise of the being of which it is capable. Our question then bears on the status which the object under consideration occupies within the dynamic order of being-in-potency - being-in-act as this is specified in a particular finite being. To say that the object is good is to say that the object belongs to this order and hence is the object of a pro-attitude on the part of the finite being which is the subject. To say that the object is bad is to say that the object upsets this order and hence is the object of an anti-attitude, since "pro-attitude" and"anti-attitude" are themselves specifications of the metaphysical drive or urge or tendency which has being-in-act as its formal object. We may say that it is by reacting in contrary fashion to that which enhances and to that which infringes or prevents the realisation of its own actuality that each finite being expresses, each in its own way, the fundamental metaphysical dynamic relation which links being-in-act to being-in-potency.

Section 4. A Difficulty.

In this final chapter we have not attempted to offer more than a very brief sketch of what we consider to be the elements of a theory of goodness more satisfactory than that provided by Ewing; and we have tried to do this while at the same time keeping as close as possible to

/to Ewing's own arguments. It is, however, clear from his own writings that Ewing, and indeed many others, would have serious objections to raise against our theory, viewed in certain of its apparent implications. It seems important to anticipate the most obvious of these objections and to indicate briefly in what measure our theory is capable of meeting it.

This objection concerns the apparent <u>relativity</u> of goodness on our theory: if the goodness of an object lies in its power to perfect a particular subject, then there will be as many "orders" of goodness as there are desiring subjects, or, supposing that we can subsume particular beings under definite species, there will, at any rate, be as many orders of goodness as there are species of finite beings. Goodness, then, will be <u>relative</u> to the species under consideration: the different species will act as so many centres of reference within which an object can be viewed as good, but it will be so impossible/to view any object without relating it to such a centre of reference. We must note in passing that this objection is distinct from the more obvious and less convincing one that our theory places the <u>ground</u> of the goodness of an object in the "needs" of a desiring subject. It is true that, on our theory, goodness appears to us as the desirable, but the ground of goodness is found in actuality - in the degree of being which an object exer-

/exercises; it is this which renders the object capable of perfecting a "needy" subject. The present objection, however, still stands when this is recognised, for it might still be the case that we are left with a number of discrete centres of reference between which no connection is possible, and this would force us always to add to our judgments of goodness a qualifying phrase as, for example, "relative to the needs of the human species". It would never be possible for us to attribute to an object a non-relative goodness. This seems to be a very serious defect for we do seem at times to apprehend or recognise in an object a goodness which is <u>not</u> relative in the sense in which we have here been using this term. For example, the goodness of knowledge appears to us as "good in itself" and not <u>merely</u> as "good <u>for</u> members of the human species". If, however, so it may be objected, we are bound by an anthropocentric point of reference, we can never provide a rational justification for this impression of non-relativity. Moreover, and this is the most serious aspect of the situation, we shall be caught in an unavoidable illusion, for we shall be forced to judge all goodness in the light of notions deriving from our anthropocentric point of reference, and to attribute non-relativity where we "see" non-relativity, without in either case being in a position to justify our point of view. This is a particularly

/particularly serious objection for us, for, in fact, what is being imputed to us is precisely that fundamental defect which we have attacked in Ewing's epistemology, namely, the lack of critical justification for the notions of ideas employed by the human mind in judging the real, the notions being, in this case, those concerned with our judgments of goodness.

This last reflection, however, gives us a certain indication of where we must look for the elements necessary to defend our position against the objection. Let us begin by considering what, in fact, is being asked of us within the framework of our own conceptions. In his commentary on Chapter I, Book I, of the NICOMACHEAN ETHICS St. Thomas makes it clear (1) that good is a "first notion" and that consequently it cannot, strictly speaking, be defined, since there are no notions more primary into which it could be resolved. It can only be described by something which is derivative from it, as, for example, a cause may be described in terms of its effects. The characteristic of good, however, is to move appetite, and it is in this sense that Aristotle's definition, "Goodness is what all desire" may be accepted as a description of what we mean by the term "goodness". It follows from this account that the concept of goodness is a relational concept since we can only think of goodness in relation to appetite. From our point of

/of view, therefore, there can be no question of conceiving something as good without relation to appetite. And the question at issue is, therefore, the question of whether we can justify the distinction between judgments of value which assert "X is good for Y", and those which assert "X is good". If, in both cases, the concept of good contains a reference to appetite, how is it possible to omit the qualifying phrase in the second case? Our answer must be that this omission can only be justified if our own appetite is itself an appetite whose actual object is nothing less than being-in-act as such. Thus for us the problem of justifying our belief that certain objects are "good in themselves" is not a question of finding and defining a type of goodness which has no reference to appetite; it is a question of finding an appetite whose "relativity" is not limited to a particular type of good, but which is open to the good as such.

The Thomist theory of the interpenetration of intellect and will, rendering the will an intelligent power, lit from within by intelligence, ensures that the "good", which is the formal object of the will, is equally transcendental with the "true", the formal object of the intellect; for, as the human intellect is measured by nothing less than being as such, so the human will is limited by

/by nothing less than being as such. We do no more than mention this theory here, acknowledging that, in an independent presentation of the Thomist philosophy of value, it would demand priority of place and detailed elaboration. It is, however, clear that it is from within this theory that the present objection of the "relativity" of goodness according to our theory must be met, and for this purpose we draw attention to the following considerations.

The human being is a finite being, and therefore his desire for "more being" is expressed in and through the various powers which characterise his nature. While maintaining, as always, the identification of the "good" or "desirable" with being-in-act we may thus envisage man's relation to <u>his</u> good as expressing itself in a certain structure of potentiality - actuality relations, corresponding to the powers which man is capable of exercising. Now, we suggest that the distinction to which we have referred between "X is good" and "X is good for Y" can be preserved in our theory if we recognise within the powers which man exercises a distinction between those which are essentially the expression of a finite or limited being, and those which do not necessarily carry the mark of finitude. This distinction may be illustrated by comparing <u>knowledge</u> and <u>health</u> con-

/considered as perfections, the former of the intellect, and the latter of the body. In the human being each of these perfections is present as a good to be aimed at, rather than as a fully actualised perfection; that is to say, it is shown forth or "foreshadowed", in the corresponding "appetite" or "desire". But if we compare the way in which these two perfections are foreshadowed in their corresponding appetites we see that there is an important difference in the two cases. The desire for knowledge is the desire for the actualisation of a power which in itself, if we abstract from the conditions in which this power is exercised in us, does not require, as a necessary condition of its exercise and consequently of its being as a power, a reference to what is other than itself. Thus its being is not necessarily limited by the being of what is other than itself, and consequently it does not contain within itself the mark of finitude. As act, or perfection, therefore, the power of knowing may be considered as a perfection of being as such. On the other hand, if we consider the perfection signified by the term "health" we see that what is referred to is a certain harmony of vital functions which is necessarily dependent on the activity of some other power whose principle is other than the principle of the vital function concerned. For example, my digestive organs function correctly,

/correctly, maintaining my body in health only if they are provided with material which has its origin in a <u>being</u> which is "other than" myself. Hence, the perfection signified by the term "health" (when understood literally) can only be attributed to a finite being: it is a mode of being necessarily concerned with and hence relative to finite being. It cannot, therefore, be said to be a perfection of <u>being as such</u>.

The theory which we have sketched here is found in the Thomist distinction between <u>pure</u> and <u>mixed</u> perfections, and it plays an important part in the final stages of the arguments employed to determine the positive attributes of God (1). What we wish to suggest is that this theory provides grounds for the distinction between "X is good" and "X is good for Y", and that it thus enables us to escape the criticism that, in defining good in relation to appetite, we are unable to provide, in our theory, for that type of goodness with which such writers as Moore, Ewing, and Ross, are most concerned, and which they all call "intrinsic".

We repeat, "good" is a relative term, for its concept necessarily contains a reference to appetite; but we maintain that this "relativity" does not necessarily condemn all goodness to the status of "good for Y", and that, in particular, in his value judgments man is not necessarily and unavoidably limited to an anthropocentric

/anthropocentric centre of reference - or, to put it another way, there is within man's centre of reference the possibility of an absolute point of view. (1) The scope of man's possible value judgments is not determined by those perfections which characterise his finite nature. On the contrary, by virtue of the spiritual powers which he possesses man is able to frame value judgments in the light of perfections which are perfections of being as such and which must therefore be regarded as goods to be aimed at in and for themselves without reference or restriction to a particular type of nature, such as human nature itself. Knowledge is good and necessarily good, since it is a perfection of being as such.

Concluding Remarks.

We have done no more here than indicate briefly the line of defence which we should adopt before what seems to us the most fundamental of the criticisms likely to be levelled against our own position. Mention must, however, be made of one further point on which a misunderstanding may arise. We have spoken of the spiritual perfections as "goods to be aimed at in and for themselves", and the gerundive form of this phrase might suggest that we have here the foundation of the moral order. We should then have to face questions of the form, "Are, then, all particular acts of knowing morally good?" In a more general form

/form the question may be framed as to whether, in order to judge of the moral goodness of an act, it is sufficient simply to recognise in it the exercise of a spiritual perfection. Our answer to this question is "No!": and if we have defended ourselves against the charge of reducing all goodness to the relative status of "good for man", we must face the apparently paradoxical position that, according to our theory, what is "good in itself" may not be "good for man". We accept this position, provided it be understood that in the phrase "good for man" we are referring to man as he is in the state of having something to do in order to realise his complete and ultimate good.

We suggest that moral goodness is essentially linked to the conception of man as homo viator and that we cannot identify what is good for man in this state with what would be good for man in the supposition that he had attained his final or ultimate perfection. We admit that the same argument whereby we defend our theory of goodness against the charge of anthropocentrism establishes the thesis that man's ultimate good or perfection must coincide with that which is "good in itself". But what we wish to insist on is that the moral order concerns precisely human acts considered in their relation to the attaining of man's final good, and that, viewed in this perspective,

/perspective, it does not follow that any and every realisation of a particular spiritual perfection is morally good, good, that is to say, as conducive towards the attainment of man's final good. Feats of athletic skill which are "good for" the fully trained athlete, which, for him, are the expression of his "enjoyment" of athletic perfection, may without any contradiction be correctly judged to be, during training, detrimental to the attainment of that very perfection of which they themselves are the expression.

Moral goodness concerns human action under the conditions of human existence as we know the latter, and what is of first importance in the assessment of such goodness is the strength and direction of the will, since it is by his will that man moves towards the good which he does not possess. The function of the intellect in this sphere is to aid the will and not to exercise its own specific perfection without reference to the repercussion of such exercise on the will's tendency towards the "really good". Thus, it is important to distinguish between man in the state of moving towards his final perfection or good, and man in the state of possessing or "enjoying" this perfection or good.

We find an indication of the correctness of making

/making this distinction in connection with the theory of goodness which we have here put forward in a remark of St. Thomas's concerning God's providential knowledge. The objection is made (1) that since, according to St. Augustine, "It is better to be ignorant of some things than to know them, for example, ignoble things", we must conclude that God has not immediate providence over ignoble and wicked things. Replying, St. Thomas says, "It is better for us not to know evil and ignoble things, in so far as by them we are impeded in our knowledge of what is better and higher (for we cannot understand many things simultaneously) and in so far as the thought of evil sometimes perverts the will towards evil. This does not hold true of God, Who sees everything simultaneously at one glance, and Whose will cannot turn in the direction of evil". Here St. Thomas's reply is based on two marks which characterise the exercise of the spiritual powers in man, namely, (1) the temporal mode of existence in which our intellectual activity is exercised, and, (2) the susceptibility of our will to be diverted from its inclination to the really good to the desire for and enjoyment in that which is incompatible with, or destructive of, this good. Where these conditions of spiritual activity are absent, as in the case of God, and, according to Thomist theory, in the case of man's final state of perfection, then all exercise of spiritual perfection is good.

Our purpose in this thesis has not been to provide an account of Thomist moral theory. This latter views moral philosophy as the science of man's actions considered in relation to his final end, and an adequate presentation of it presupposes the elaboration of the whole metaphysical structure of being, culminating in the proof of the existence of an Infinite Being, and returning from this to an analysis of the metaphysical status of man. The above brief remarks, therefore, on moral goodness are in no way intended as an introduction to Thomist moral theory. Moreover, we are aware that the suggestions we have made regarding moral goodness give rise to further questions and require a great deal of detailed clarification. This should, however, in our opinion, form the subject of a separate study, for which this present work might serve as an introduction. It is true that the question, how "good" is to be defined, is presented by Moore and Ewing as the most important and fundamental question in Ethics, but our examination of Ewing's attempt to answer this question, together with the considerations we have put forward concerning "non-naturalism" in general have, we hope, shown that while the answer to this question may be of vital importance for ethical enquiry, the question itself and the elements required for its answer belong not to Ethics but to Metaphysics.

REFERENCES. CHAPTER VI.

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(1) See S.Th. Q.5, a.1, and a.3, Q.20, a.2; De Veritate, Q.21, a.2 corpus, also ad.6.

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(1) See, e.g., D. of G. pp.149-150.

Page 234.

(1) See, e.g., D. of G. p.172.

Page 245.

(1) In Decem Libros Ethicorum Aristotelis Ad Nicomachum, Marietti, Turin, 1949, (9).

Page 249.

(1) See, e.g. F. Van Steenberghen, Ontologie, Louvain 1946, pp.163-170.

Page 250.

(1) Compare this with the "absolute point of view" in the sphere of theoretical judgment, as we have described this in Chapter III, Section 4; and also with the significance of the Thomist view that the intellect is measured by being and by nothing less, towhich we drew attention in Chapter I, Section 2.

Page 253.

(1) S.Th. I. Q.22, a.3, ad.3.

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NOTE ON TRANSLATIONS.

In all cases where we have made our own translation from the Latin text of St. Thomas we have given the source in Latin in the reference notes. All the translations of the Summa Theologica are taken from The Basic Writing of Saint Thomas Aquinas, edited and annotated by Anton C. Pegis (Random House, New York, 1945). This work is a revision and annotation of the English Dominican Translation of St. Thomas, begun in 1911.

Abbreviations used in references to the Summa :-

Roman Numerals following "S.Th." (e.g., I-II) indicate the Part (Prima Secundae).

"Q." - Question.
"a" - Article.
"ad" - Reply to objection (followed by the number of the objection).